Cities Under Pressure

Compare sources and decisions during the 1918 influenza pandemic

TOT.P.2.2 "Develop skills which demonstrate an understanding of historical events and the people who shaped our history. Gather and evaluate the usefulness of various formats of evidence for specific inquiry, analyzing the broader historical context..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline four dated events, then number them in time order within each city. Circle two kinds of evidence and write a question mark beside one limit of each.

Two Cities, One Pandemic

1. In autumn 1918, influenza spread through American cities while the United States fought World War I. Troop travel and crowded workplaces helped carry infection, but officials had limited tools for tracking it. Philadelphia held a large Liberty Loan parade on September 28 to sell war bonds. People gathered closely along the streets. On October 3, as hospitals faced a surge of patients, city officials closed schools, theaters, and other gathering places. A parade advertisement could show what organizers wanted citizens to do, but it could not measure how many infections followed. That question needs other evidence.

2. St. Louis faced the same national emergency, but its local sequence was different. The city had reported influenza cases by October 5, and officials ordered schools and theaters closed on October 7. A municipal death register could help compare deaths across cities, if a researcher checks whether the cities recorded deaths in the same way. A nurse's diary might reveal crowded wards and difficult choices that totals cannot show. Yet one nurse saw only certain patients, and a register could miss people whose deaths were recorded under another cause. Neither source alone tells the whole story.

3. Different people also had different reasons for supporting or resisting closures. A health officer might focus on keeping hospitals from filling, while a shop owner might fear losing wages or customers. The wartime bond drive pressed organizers to bring people together, even as infection made crowds dangerous. Researchers later found that St. Louis had a lower peak death rate than Philadelphia. The timing of restrictions is one possible explanation, not a complete verdict: population density, travel patterns, and how deaths were counted could matter too. To test a claim, line up each city's dates, then weigh sources against their limits.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why would a parade advertisement help answer a question about organizers' goals but not a question about infections after the parade?

2. To investigate what hospital staff faced, would a nurse's diary or a death register be more useful? Give one limit of your choice.

3. How might a health officer and a shop owner judge a decision to close gathering places differently? Explain each person's concern.

4. Why does St. Louis's lower peak death rate not prove that the timing of closures was the only cause?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Complete the parallel timeline with the four dated events in the passage. Then write two sentences explaining how the timing could support a claim about closures and why it cannot prove that claim.

DATE	PHILADELPHIA	ST. LOUIS

ANSWER KEY

Cities Under Pressure

HIGH SCHOOL · TOT.P.2.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline four dated events, then number them in time order within each city. Circle two kinds of evidence and write a question mark beside one limit of each. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why would a parade advertisement help answer a question about organizers' goals but not a question about infections after the parade?	**It could show that organizers wanted people to attend and buy war bonds, but it would not count infections that followed.**
2	To investigate what hospital staff faced, would a nurse's diary or a death register be more useful? Give one limit of your choice.	**A nurse's diary would better describe conditions and decisions in a hospital, but one nurse saw only certain patients.**
3	How might a health officer and a shop owner judge a decision to close gathering places differently? Explain each person's concern.	**A health officer might support closures to keep hospitals from filling. A shop owner might oppose them because lost customers could mean lost income.**
4	Why does St. Louis's lower peak death rate not prove that the timing of closures was the only cause?	**Other factors, such as population density, travel patterns, or differences in how deaths were recorded, could also affect the comparison.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

September 28 | Liberty Loan parade held | No event specified
October 3 | Schools and theaters closed | No event specified
October 5 | No event specified | Influenza cases reported by this date
October 7 | No event specified | Schools and theaters closed
Philadelphia held a parade before closing gathering places, while St. Louis closed schools and theaters soon after reporting cases, which could help explain its lower peak death rate. Differences in population density or travel patterns mean that timing alone cannot prove why the rates differed.

Accept equivalent wording and other limits supported by the passage. In the timeline, “no event specified” means the passage gives no dated event for that city, not that nothing happened there.