Two Cities, One Outbreak

Compare local choices during the 1918 influenza pandemic

USH.P.2.2.C "Evaluate how multiple, complex events are shaped by unique circumstances of time and place; construct and interpret parallel timelines."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline time clues, circle a local condition or decision in each city, and number each city's actions in order, starting at 1 for each city.

Influenza in Philadelphia and St. Louis

1 In 1918, influenza traveled with people during World War I. Philadelphia was a crowded port and industrial city where ships, trains, and war work brought people together. As sickness spread, physicians urged officials to cancel a Liberty Loan parade, a public event to raise money for the war. City leaders allowed the parade on September 28. Huge crowds lined the streets. On October 3, officials closed schools and banned public gatherings, but infections were already rising rapidly. Hospitals filled, and nurses were in short supply. The war had helped create the gathering, while local decisions affected how quickly the city responded.

2 St. Louis faced the same virus but made different choices. It was an inland transportation hub with busy rail connections, not a port like Philadelphia. In early October 1918, as influenza appeared locally, health commissioner Dr. Max Starkloff urged officials to close schools, theaters, and other meeting places. City officials acted quickly. These rules reduced opportunities for the virus to pass between people, though families and workers still had contact. Restrictions disrupted paychecks and daily life, and some residents objected. The city could not stop influenza, but its early restrictions helped keep its death rate below Philadelphia's during the fall outbreak.

3 In late October, Philadelphia was still dealing with its earlier surge, while St. Louis kept limits on gatherings in place. In November, both cities eased some restrictions as cases fell. St. Louis later saw cases rise again and brought back tighter limits. These events happened during the same pandemic, yet each city faced a different sequence of decisions and effects. Dates help establish which actions came first, but they cannot by themselves explain an outcome. Local gathering places, wartime demands, and the choices of officials also shaped what happened. An early response in St. Louis did not end the threat.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the timing of Philadelphia's parade and school closures matter to the city's outbreak?

2. Compare the timing of the two cities' actions in early October. What was happening with influenza when each city acted?

3. How do the late October events in the two cities reflect their earlier decisions?

4. Why would a timeline of dates alone give an incomplete explanation of the cities' different outcomes?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Complete a parallel timeline for the two cities using late September, early October, late October, and November as your four time labels. Write “not stated” where the passage gives no event for a city, then write two sentences below the table explaining how a difference in timing or local conditions shaped the cities' experiences.

TIME	PHILADELPHIA	ST. LOUIS

ANSWER KEY

Two Cities, One Outbreak

HIGH SCHOOL · USH.P.2.2.C

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline time clues, circle a local condition or decision in each city, and number each city's actions in order, starting at 1 for each city. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the timing of Philadelphia's parade and school closures matter to the city's outbreak?	**The September 28 parade brought huge crowds together. Officials did not close schools or ban gatherings until October 3, when infections were already rising rapidly.**
2	Compare the timing of the two cities' actions in early October. What was happening with influenza when each city acted?	**Philadelphia acted when infections were already rising rapidly. St. Louis acted as influenza appeared locally, before a comparable surge described in the passage.**
3	How do the late October events in the two cities reflect their earlier decisions?	**Philadelphia was still dealing with its earlier surge after allowing the parade and closing gathering places later. St. Louis continued its early limits on gatherings.**
4	Why would a timeline of dates alone give an incomplete explanation of the cities' different outcomes?	**Dates show the order of events, but the wartime parade, crowded gathering places, and officials' different decisions help explain why the outbreaks differed.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Late September | Officials allowed the September 28 parade. | Not stated.
Early October | Officials closed schools and banned gatherings on October 3. | Officials quickly closed schools, theaters, and other meeting places.
Late October | The city was still dealing with its earlier surge. | Limits on gatherings remained in place.
November | The city eased some restrictions. | The city eased some restrictions, then tightened limits after cases rose again.
Philadelphia allowed a wartime parade before closing gathering places, so its outbreak was already growing when officials acted.
St. Louis restricted gatherings earlier in its local outbreak, helping keep its death rate below Philadelphia's that fall.

Accept equivalent descriptions of each city's events and reasonable explanations grounded in the passage. The St. Louis cell for late September should indicate that no event is stated, not assume that nothing happened.