Two Cities, One Flu

Compare how timing and local choices shaped the 1918 influenza outbreak.

WG.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 each dated event in the passage and write P beside Philadelphia events or S beside St. Louis events. Circle details about local choices or conditions that may help explain what happened next.

The 1918 Flu in Philadelphia and St. Louis

1 In September 1918, influenza was spreading across the United States as World War I moved people between cities. Philadelphia and St. Louis faced the same virus, but their public decisions took different paths. On September 28, Philadelphia held a large Liberty Loan parade to raise money for the war. Thousands crowded the streets even though influenza cases had appeared locally. In St. Louis, officials had not yet banned large gatherings; its strongest restrictions would come in October. The cities faced the same disease during the same national emergency, but the timing of local events would shape what happened next.

2 In early October, Philadelphia shut schools and banned public gatherings, but the parade had already brought people close together. St. Louis acted early in its local outbreak: health commissioner Max Starkloff ordered schools, theaters, and other gathering places closed. By mid-October, Philadelphia's hospitals were overwhelmed, and deaths rose sharply. St. Louis also suffered deaths, but its early wave had a lower peak than Philadelphia's. The date of a rule cannot explain everything. The parade crowd, the timing of each city's outbreak, and how quickly restrictions followed local cases all help explain why their October experiences differed.

3 By November, Philadelphia's worst wave had passed, but its October losses could not be undone. St. Louis lifted many gathering restrictions in mid-November as its case numbers fell. Later that month, cases rose again, and officials renewed restrictions. The two local stories did not end in the same way when their first waves receded. On parallel timelines, Philadelphia's crowded September event came before its October closures. St. Louis closed gathering places early, then faced renewed spread after reopening. Comparing the sequence of events helps show how timing and local choices shaped each city's experience.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What happened in Philadelphia before its early-October closures, and why might that order of events matter?

2. Compare the cities' early-October actions and mid-October conditions. What difference does the sequence suggest?

3. How did the order of events in St. Louis during November affect its outbreak?

4. Why would a comparison limited to October miss an important part of each city's story? Use one event from outside October for each city.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Complete the parallel timelines for late September, early October, mid-October, and late November using events or conditions from the passage. Then write two sentences explaining how a difference in timing or local choices shaped the cities' experiences.

PERIOD	PHILADELPHIA	ST. LOUIS

ANSWER KEY

Two Cities, One Flu

HIGH SCHOOL · WG.P.2.2.C

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each dated event in the passage and write P beside Philadelphia events or S beside St. Louis events. Circle details about local choices or conditions that may help explain what happened next. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What happened in Philadelphia before its early-October closures, and why might that order of events matter?	**Philadelphia held a crowded parade on September 28. People gathered closely before the city closed schools and banned gatherings, giving the virus an opportunity to spread.**
2	Compare the cities' early-October actions and mid-October conditions. What difference does the sequence suggest?	**Philadelphia restricted gatherings after its parade and had overwhelmed hospitals and sharply rising deaths by mid-October. St. Louis closed gathering places early in its local outbreak and had a lower peak in its early wave.**
3	How did the order of events in St. Louis during November affect its outbreak?	**St. Louis lifted many restrictions when cases fell in mid-November. Cases rose again later that month, and officials renewed restrictions.**
4	Why would a comparison limited to October miss an important part of each city's story? Use one event from outside October for each city.	**It would miss Philadelphia's crowded September 28 parade, which came before its closures. It would also miss St. Louis's November reopening and later rise in cases.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Late September | Held a crowded parade on September 28 | Had not yet banned large gatherings
Early October | Closed schools and banned public gatherings | Closed schools, theaters, and other gathering places
Mid-October | Hospitals were overwhelmed as deaths rose | Its early wave had a lower peak
Late November | Its worst wave had passed | Cases rose again, and officials renewed restrictions
Philadelphia's parade brought people together before its closures. St. Louis restricted gatherings early in its local outbreak, but cases rose again after it reopened.

Accept brief entries that accurately place events in both cities. Explanations should connect a difference in timing or local choices to an outcome without claiming that one event alone caused it.