

Messages in Motion

Compare how competing publications shape a local transit debate.

10.C.4 “Examining Media Messages Analyze the viewpoint of print and digital publications (e.g., advertisements, editorials, blogs, and websites). Analyze, compare, and contrast visual and verbal media messages for content (e.g....”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline words and visual details that could influence readers. Circle statements that show included or omitted information, and write 1, 2, or 3 beside clues to each publication’s viewpoint.

The Riverton Transit Vote

- ① Riverton voters will decide whether to fund a new bus rapid transit line. Two weeks before the vote, the Transit Department posted a digital fact sheet. A map showed the proposed route in blue, with stops near the hospital, community college, and downtown. The page stated that the line would run every ten minutes during peak hours and would be paid for by a half-cent sales tax for twelve years. It also noted that an independent traffic study predicted fewer cars on one crowded avenue. The department’s goal was to explain the plan and build public support.
- ② That same week, a neighborhood business group mailed a glossy advertisement titled “Save Our Main Street.” Its large photo showed an empty storefront beneath gray clouds, although the proposed route would not travel on Main Street. The ad called the tax “a permanent burden” and warned that “bureaucrats” would waste local money. It did not mention the twelve-year limit, the hospital stop, or the traffic study. By focusing on a fearful image and selected information, the group promoted its commercial interest: protecting nearby parking and driving access. The advertisement could persuade readers to oppose the measure, but its claims require careful checking.
- ③ An online editorial from the Riverton Student Voice supported the transit line, but it also used persuasion. A photo of crowded students waiting at a bus stop appeared beside the headline, “Students Deserve a Faster Ride.” The writer quoted two students who favored the plan and argued that critics claimed the project would “destroy every local business,” then replied that this claim was exaggerated. The editorial did not interview business owners who opposed the measure. Posts sharing the advertisement and editorial received many comments, and a local poll later found more voters calling traffic their top concern. Media coverage may have helped shape that trend, although the poll alone cannot prove the cause.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What viewpoint does the Transit Department fact sheet present? Give two details that support your answer.

2 How do the business group's visual and verbal choices try to influence readers? Name one important detail the advertisement leaves out.

3 What persuasive technique may appear in the Student Voice editorial's description of critics? Explain why.

4 What possible cause-and-effect relationship does the passage describe between media coverage and public opinion? Why can the poll not prove that relationship?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Create two contrasting media messages about a proposed later school start time, one supporting it and one opposing it. In 90 to 120 words, describe each message's words or visual, identify a likely motive or bias, and explain how the messages could affect public opinion.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline words and visual details that could influence readers. Circle statements that show included or omitted information, and write 1, 2, or 3 beside clues to each publication's viewpoint. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What viewpoint does the Transit Department fact sheet present? Give two details that support your answer.	It presents the transit line favorably and seeks support. It provides practical details about frequent service, the twelve-year sales tax, useful stops, and a traffic study predicting fewer cars.
2	How do the business group's visual and verbal choices try to influence readers? Name one important detail the advertisement leaves out.	The empty storefront, gray clouds, "permanent burden," and "bureaucrats" create fear and distrust. It leaves out the twelve-year tax limit, the hospital stop, or the independent traffic study.
3	What persuasive technique may appear in the Student Voice editorial's description of critics? Explain why.	It may use a strawman by presenting critics as saying the project would "destroy every local business," an extreme claim, and then refuting that claim instead of addressing a fuller opposing argument.
4	What possible cause-and-effect relationship does the passage describe between media coverage and public opinion? Why can the poll not prove that relationship?	Posts and publications about the transit plan may have helped make traffic a top concern for more voters. The poll shows a later trend, but it does not prove that media coverage, rather than other factors, caused the change.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The supporting school website shows a sleepy student beside the words "Learning Starts When Students Are Ready." It highlights research about teen sleep and says buses can be rescheduled. Its social motive is student well-being, but it may be biased because it does not discuss after-school jobs. The opposing athletic booster post uses a photo of a dark field and the phrase "Don't End Friday Night Lights." It emphasizes scheduling problems and may reflect a desire to protect sports events. The first message could build support among families concerned about health. The second could lead voters to worry about activities and oppose the change.

Accept equivalent analyses that connect specific wording, visual details, selected information, or omissions to viewpoint and intent. For Question 4, students must recognize that the passage suggests a possible connection, not proven causation.