Who Shapes the Story?

Analyze how a publisher's interests influence a message.

11.C.4.A "Analyze the sources and viewpoint(s) of publications including advertisements, editorials, blogs, and websites."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle each publisher or author, underline words that reveal a viewpoint or purpose, and number each piece of evidence or missing information that affects how much you trust the publication.

Three Views of Solar Bus Shelters

1. An advertisement from BrightShade, a company bidding to build solar bus shelters in the fictional city of Lakeview, shows commuters waiting beneath a glowing roof. Its headline says, "Turn Every Stop into a Safe, Cool Place." Small print states that the shelters can provide lighting, shade, and phone charging. The ad does not mention the proposed cost or whether the solar panels would generate enough power during winter. Because BrightShade could win a contract, its cheerful images and selected benefits encourage residents to support the project. The company is a primary source for its own proposal, but not an independent judge of value.

2. In a Lakeview Ledger editorial, the unsigned editorial board argues that the city should delay the purchase until officials publish a maintenance plan. The writers cite a city finance report estimating that each shelter would cost $42,000 to install. They also quote a bus rider who wants more shade near her apartment. By emphasizing taxpayer costs and unanswered planning questions, the editorial presents caution as responsible citizenship. Its evidence includes a public document and a resident's experience, yet the board's recommendation reflects the newspaper's institutional viewpoint.

3. A post on the nonprofit Healthy Streets Network's website supports installing the shelters before next summer. The post links to a peer-reviewed study about shade at transit stops and reports that heat can make waiting for buses dangerous, especially for older adults. It also features a map showing Lakeview stops with little tree cover. Healthy Streets advocates for safer walking, biking, and transit, so its mission shapes its focus on health and access. Unlike the advertisement, the post names an outside research source, but readers should still check the study and consider costs, maintenance, and other city priorities before accepting its conclusion.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why is BrightShade a primary source for its proposal but not an independent judge of whether the project is worthwhile?

2. What two important details does the BrightShade advertisement leave out, and how does leaving them out support its viewpoint?

3. What two types of evidence does the Lakeview Ledger editorial use, and what viewpoint does its selection of evidence support?

4. What source does the Healthy Streets post use that the advertisement does not, and why should readers still evaluate the post carefully?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose an advertisement, editorial, blog, or website about a public issue. Write three sentences that identify the publisher and purpose, name one source or piece of evidence to check, and explain how the publisher's viewpoint may shape the message.

ANSWER KEY

Who Shapes the Story?

GRADE 11 · 11.C.4.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle each publisher or author, underline words that reveal a viewpoint or purpose, and number each piece of evidence or missing information that affects how much you trust the publication. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why is BrightShade a primary source for its proposal but not an independent judge of whether the project is worthwhile?	**BrightShade is the company making the proposal, so it can describe its own product. Because it could win the contract, it has an interest in presenting the project positively.**
2	What two important details does the BrightShade advertisement leave out, and how does leaving them out support its viewpoint?	**It leaves out the proposed cost and whether the panels would provide enough winter power. Omitting possible drawbacks helps the ad make the shelters seem more appealing.**
3	What two types of evidence does the Lakeview Ledger editorial use, and what viewpoint does its selection of evidence support?	**It uses a city finance report and a bus rider's experience. Its focus on cost and missing planning details supports delaying the purchase until a maintenance plan is published.**
4	What source does the Healthy Streets post use that the advertisement does not, and why should readers still evaluate the post carefully?	**The post links to a peer-reviewed study, an outside research source. Readers should still evaluate it because Healthy Streets advocates for transit and focuses on health and access rather than all project concerns.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The county health department's website encourages families to use free vaccination clinics. It cites state immunization data, but I would check when the data were collected and whether the page links to the full report. Because the department aims to protect public health, its viewpoint favors vaccination and may give less attention to barriers such as clinic hours or transportation.

Accept equivalent explanations that connect each publisher's interests, mission, or role to its viewpoint and use of evidence. For the open response, accept any appropriate publication if the student identifies its source, evaluates evidence, and explains how viewpoint may influence the message.