Behind the Message

Compare evidence, language, viewpoints, and possible bias in local media.

9.C.4.C "Evaluate the credibility, word choice, viewpoints, and bias in media presentations."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline details that support or weaken a presentation's credibility, circle loaded or overly certain words, and number the three viewpoints 1–3 so you can compare possible bias.

Three Messages About Electric Buses

1. On Monday, the Riverton Transit Board held a public meeting about replacing six diesel school buses with electric buses. A video report from Channel 8 showed a bus charging at the depot and quoted the board chair, who said the proposal would cost $2.4 million before state rebates. The report linked viewers to the board agenda and included a transportation professor who explained that battery range can drop in cold weather. However, the video did not interview drivers, families, or taxpayers who might question the plan. Its calm narration used words such as "proposal" and "estimate," which signal that details could change.

2. A post from Clean Air Riverton, a local advocacy group, called the buses "an obvious win for every child." It said electric buses have no tailpipe emissions while driving, but it gave no link for its claim that the switch would save the district $500,000 each year. The post used a photo of children beside a green bus and asked followers to share it before the vote. The group's focus on cleaner air explains its viewpoint, yet the post leaves out purchase costs, charging equipment, and the electricity used to charge buses. Its emotional wording makes the benefits sound certain.

3. In a radio interview, the president of the Riverton Taxpayers Association argued that the board should "stop this costly experiment." She correctly noted that the proposal needs public funding, but she said no electric bus can finish a winter route. That statement is too broad because the Channel 8 expert said cold weather can reduce range, not that every route fails. The association's website sells membership and urges listeners to oppose the purchase. This does not automatically make its argument false, but it gives listeners a reason to check its claims against the agenda, independent research, and local route data. Together, the three presentations offer different evidence and priorities.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which two details from the Channel 8 report make it more credible than a claim with no source?

2. What viewpoint does Clean Air Riverton present, and what important information does its post leave out?

3. How does the phrase “an obvious win for every child” affect the tone of Clean Air Riverton’s post?

4. Why is the Taxpayers Association president’s statement about winter routes weak evidence?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Using evidence from at least two presentations, write 3 to 4 sentences explaining how the board should evaluate the bus proposal. Include one credible detail, one possible bias or limitation, and one source or type of data the board should check before deciding.

ANSWER KEY

Behind the Message

GRADE 9 · 9.C.4.C

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline details that support or weaken a presentation's credibility, circle loaded or overly certain words, and number the three viewpoints 1–3 so you can compare possible bias. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which two details from the Channel 8 report make it more credible than a claim with no source?	**It links viewers to the board agenda and includes a transportation professor's explanation about cold-weather battery range.**
2	What viewpoint does Clean Air Riverton present, and what important information does its post leave out?	**It supports cleaner air and electric buses. It leaves out purchase costs, charging equipment, and electricity used for charging.**
3	How does the phrase "an obvious win for every child" affect the tone of Clean Air Riverton's post?	**It creates an emotional, overly certain tone that makes the benefits sound guaranteed.**
4	Why is the Taxpayers Association president's statement about winter routes weak evidence?	**She claims that no electric bus can finish a winter route, but the expert only says cold weather can reduce range, not that every route fails.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Channel 8 is a useful starting point because it links to the board agenda and includes an expert's caution about cold-weather range. Clean Air Riverton supports cleaner buses, but its post does not support its yearly savings claim and leaves out major costs. Before deciding, the board should compare the agenda with independent research and local winter route data.

Accept responses that accurately use evidence from at least two of the three presentations. Students may identify different credible details, biases, limitations, or relevant sources to check if their reasoning matches the passage.