News Opinion Loop

Trace possible two-way links between coverage and public views.

9.C.4.F "Identify the possible cause and effect relationships between mass media coverage and public opinion trends in media messages."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline details about what media messages emphasize, circle each public-opinion trend, and draw a numbered arrow from a media detail to a trend it may have influenced. Include any trend that may have influenced later coverage.

Bike Lanes in Riverton

1. When the city of Riverton proposed adding protected bike lanes, local television stations began with brief reports about traffic delays expected during construction. The reports often showed long lines of cars and interviewed drivers who worried about slower trips. In a poll taken that week, more residents said the project would make commuting harder than said it would improve safety. The poll did not prove that television coverage caused the opinion trend. However, repeated images of congestion may have made construction concerns easier for viewers to remember when they answered.

2. Two weeks later, a regional newspaper published maps, crash data, and interviews with students who rode bicycles to school. Its online articles explained that protected lanes separate riders from moving cars and described similar projects in nearby cities. Social media users shared some of these articles, while others posted clips criticizing the plan. A second poll found increased support, especially among respondents who said they had seen the maps or safety information. This pattern suggests that broader coverage may have contributed to changing views, but other events, conversations, or the wording of the polls could also have mattered.

3. City leaders should not treat either poll as a final verdict. Media outlets choose which facts, voices, photographs, and headlines to emphasize, and those choices can shape what people notice. At the same time, public opinion can affect later coverage. As support grew, reporters covered a crowded public meeting and interviewed families asking for safer routes. That attention could lead more people to discuss the proposal, creating another shift in opinion. To judge the relationship carefully, readers should compare several messages, check dates, and look for polling methods rather than assuming one headline changed everyone's mind.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What part of the first television reports may have contributed to the early belief that bike lanes would make commuting harder? Explain the possible effect on viewers.

2. How might the newspaper's maps, crash data, and safety information be connected to the increase in support shown in the second poll?

3. Identify the reverse cause-and-effect relationship described in paragraph 3. How could public opinion affect media coverage?

4. Why does the passage say that neither poll proves media coverage caused a change in public opinion? Give one reason from the passage.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Invent a school or community issue. In exactly three sentences, describe one media message about it, identify a possible effect on public opinion, and explain either how public opinion could affect later coverage or why the message alone cannot prove cause.

ANSWER KEY

News Opinion Loop

GRADE 9 · 9.C.4.F

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline details about what media messages emphasize, circle each public-opinion trend, and draw a numbered arrow from a media detail to a trend it may have influenced. Include any trend that may have influenced later coverage. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What part of the first television reports may have contributed to the early belief that bike lanes would make commuting harder? Explain the possible effect on viewers.	**The reports repeatedly showed traffic congestion and interviewed worried drivers. Those details may have made construction delays more memorable, leading some viewers to expect harder commutes.**
2	How might the newspaper's maps, crash data, and safety information be connected to the increase in support shown in the second poll?	**The information may have helped people notice possible safety benefits, which could have contributed to increased support for the bike lanes.**
3	Identify the reverse cause-and-effect relationship described in paragraph 3. How could public opinion affect media coverage?	**Growing support led reporters to cover a crowded public meeting and families seeking safer routes. Public interest could cause or encourage more coverage of the proposal.**
4	Why does the passage say that neither poll proves media coverage caused a change in public opinion? Give one reason from the passage.	**Other events, conversations, or differences in poll wording could have affected the results. A poll alone cannot show that media coverage was the only cause.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A local news site posts a video showing students waiting in the rain for late buses. The video could increase support for adding bus shelters because viewers may focus on the problem. If support rises, reporters might cover a school board meeting, although the video alone would not prove it caused the change.

Accept reasonable cause-and-effect claims that connect a specific media choice or message to a possible opinion trend and use cautious language such as may or could. For the open task, require exactly three sentences and a plausible explanation of either reverse influence or a limit on proving causation.