

News With Care

How the press informs the public responsibly

CE.9.a “explaining the role and rights of the press in reporting events;”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline actions that show the press's role, circle rights the press has, and number two responsibilities reporters must follow.

Reporting a Community Concern

- ① On Tuesday, reporters gathered outside a county board meeting after residents raised concerns about smoke from a recycling plant. The reporters' job was not to decide whether the plant was guilty. They watched the public meeting, interviewed residents and officials, checked inspection reports, and explained what they could confirm. By reporting verified information, the press helps people understand events that may affect their health, money, and community. This information also helps voters judge how public officials respond.
- ② The First Amendment protects freedom of the press. This means government officials generally cannot stop a news organization from publishing a lawful report before the public sees it, a practice called prior restraint. Journalists may attend open government meetings and ask for many public records under access laws. These rights are not unlimited. A reporter does not have a right to enter a private home, cross a police safety line, or publish false statements that harm a person's reputation.
- ③ Reliable reporting requires responsibility as well as rights. Before publishing, journalists compare claims with documents, ask people with different knowledge of the event, and correct important errors. They identify sources when possible and tell readers when a fact is still unknown. For example, a reporter may report that the board received complaints, but should not state that smoke caused an illness without reliable evidence. Careful reporting can hold people in power accountable while protecting the public from rumors and unfair accusations.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What three actions did the reporters take to check information about the recycling plant?

2 How does protection from prior restraint support the press?

3 Name two limits on a reporter's rights from the passage.

4 Why should a reporter avoid saying that smoke caused an illness without reliable evidence?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

A water main breaks near an elementary school. Write 3 to 4 sentences explaining how a reporter could cover this event. Include one press right and at least two steps the reporter should take to report responsibly.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline actions that show the press's role, circle rights the press has, and number two responsibilities reporters must follow. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What three actions did the reporters take to check information about the recycling plant?	They watched the public meeting, interviewed residents and officials, and checked inspection reports.
2	How does protection from prior restraint support the press?	It generally prevents government officials from stopping a news organization from publishing a lawful report before the public sees it.
3	Name two limits on a reporter's rights from the passage.	Answers may include: reporters may not enter a private home, cross a police safety line, or publish false statements that harm a person's reputation.
4	Why should a reporter avoid saying that smoke caused an illness without reliable evidence?	The claim may be untrue. Responsible reporting protects the public from rumors and unfair accusations.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A reporter can attend an open town meeting and request public records about the break. The reporter should check statements from town officials and utility workers to confirm which streets are affected. The report should not claim that the broken main made anyone sick unless reliable evidence supports that claim.

Accept equivalent examples of press rights, limits, and responsible reporting that match the passage. For Part 3, look for one valid right, such as attending an open meeting or requesting public records, plus at least two verification or fairness steps.