

Document 2a:

Robert F. Kennedy Jr. : a short biography (from Wikipedia)

Robert Francis Kennedy Jr. (born January 17, 1954), also known by his initials **RFK Jr.**, is an American politician, environmental lawyer, author, _____ theorist, and _____ activist serving as the 26th United States secretary of _____ and human services since 2025. A member of the prominent Kennedy family, he is a son of Senator and U.S. attorney general Robert F. Kennedy and a nephew of U.S. president _____ F. Kennedy.



Kennedy began his career as an assistant district attorney in Manhattan. In the mid-1980s, he joined two nonprofits focused on environmental protection: Riverkeeper and the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC). In 1986, he became an adjunct professor of environmental law at Pace University School of Law, and in 1987 he founded Pace's Environmental Litigation Clinic. In 1999, Kennedy founded the nonprofit environmental group Waterkeeper Alliance. He first ran as a member of the _____ Party and later started an independent campaign in the 2024 presidential election, before withdrawing from the race and endorsing the _____ Party's nominee, Donald Trump.

Since 2005, Kennedy has promoted _____ misinformation and public-health _____ theories, including the chemtrail _____ theory, HIV/AIDS denialism, and the scientifically disproved claim of a causal link between vaccines and _____. He has drawn criticism for fueling _____ hesitancy amid a social climate that gave rise to the deadly measles outbreaks in Samoa and Tonga.



Document 2b: "Enough is enough"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0_OjKe4BuDE

1) General understanding

a) What is this document? When was it made?

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b) What has been happening since the 1990s and why?

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2) Detailed understanding

a) What is Tartrazine? Why is it controversial?

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b) Why does he think Trump would do a better job for Americans' health than the Democrats?

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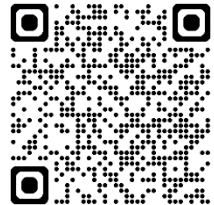
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Document 2c:

What sort of document is it?

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What main event does it cover? (give as many details as possible)

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What are the different reactions concerning the strategy?

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Going further:

To read the full report: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/maha/>



Document 3:



Christina Pagel, Sheena Cruickshank, *The Conversation*, 11 August 2025

PART 1

Vaccines are one of the greatest public health success stories of all time. Over the past 50 years, they've saved an estimated 154 million lives. But in the US, both access to vaccines and public trust in them are being systematically undermined – not by conspiracy theorists online, but from within the highest levels of government.

- 5 In January 2025, Robert F. Kennedy Jr – long associated with vaccine misinformation – was confirmed as US health secretary. Despite being pressed during his Senate confirmation hearings, Kennedy insisted he was not anti-vaccine and pledged to maintain scientific standards.

Seven months later, his actions tell a different story.

- 10 Kennedy has launched a sweeping assault on the US vaccine infrastructure: gutting¹ oversight² committees, sowing doubt about settled science, politicising ingredient

¹ destroying

² supervision

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safety, limiting access to vaccines and halting funding for research. His strategy doesn't involve outright bans. But the cumulative effect may prove just as damaging.

15 In the US, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) plays a central role in vaccine policy, offering evidence-based recommendations on schedules. Until recently, its members were respected experts in immunology, epidemiology and infectious disease – all vetted³, conflict-checked and publicly accountable.

20 In May 2025, Kennedy overrode⁴ ACIP's recommendation on COVID-19 vaccination for pregnant women and young children. The following month, he disbanded⁵ the 17-member committee, citing alleged conflicts of interest. In their place, Kennedy appointed a smaller panel that included people with well-documented anti-vaccine views.

25 This broke decades of precedent. For the first time, ACIP's membership was handpicked by the health secretary without standard vetting, training or safeguards to ensure independence.

In July, the ousted⁶ ACIP members published a commentary in the New England Journal of Medicine, warning the recommendation process was facing “seismic disruption”. In August, Kennedy banned respected scientific societies from advising ACIP, claiming they were too biased. This removed yet another check on the panel's independence.

30 Meanwhile, Kennedy has reopened long-closed debates. He has called for “reassessment” of the childhood vaccine schedule, standard vaccine ingredients, and reportedly even the thoroughly debunked claim that the MMR⁷ vaccine is linked to autism. The latter has been refuted by multiple peer-reviewed studies, including a meta-analysis involving over 1.2 million children.

35 At ACIP's first meeting under new leadership, Kennedy's panel reviewed thimerosal, a mercury-based preservative used in some flu vaccines. CDC⁸ scientists were scheduled to present their evidence but were dropped from the agenda. Instead, the only evidence came from Lyn Redwood, a vaccine critic and co-founder of the World Mercury Project, an initiative that preceded Kennedy's own Children's Health Defense group.

40 Her presentation appeared to include at least one non-existent study, yet ACIP went on to ban thimerosal from flu shots – a decision Kennedy later extended to all US vaccines.

³ approved

⁴ rejected

⁵ Broke up

⁶ removed

⁷ Measles, mumps, rubella ; *Rougeole-oreillons-rubéole*

⁸ Centers for Disease Control is a national, public health agency

Though thimerosal was already used in very few vaccines, the way it was removed – based on flawed evidence and limited expert input – sets a dangerous precedent.

45 Kennedy has also criticised aluminium hydroxide, used in many vaccines to boost the immune response. His review article contradicts a large body of peer-reviewed evidence that supports its safety. Aluminium salts are found in vaccines against hepatitis A and B, meningococcal disease and tetanus.

Restricting access and innovation

50 The ripple effects of Kennedy's changes go beyond oversight. In July, ACIP announced it would review recommendations for childhood vaccines, **hepatitis B at birth**, and the MMRV combination vaccine — a single shot that protects against measles, mumps, rubella, and varicella (chickenpox).

These guidelines help determine what vaccines are covered by public insurers like Medicaid. Weakening them could make vaccines unaffordable for low-income families.

55 [...] If Kennedy bans widely used ingredients like aluminium salts, companies may be forced to reformulate vaccines – triggering unnecessary full clinical trials (the multi-phase process typically required for entirely new vaccines) and delaying access to boosters.

60 In May, vaccine manufacturer Moderna withdrew its application for a combined COVID-flu vaccine, citing regulatory difficulties. Days later, Kennedy's department cancelled US\$700 million (£550 million) in funding for a Moderna bird flu vaccine, followed by cuts to HIV vaccine research and mRNA platforms for cancer prevention.

Other countries may continue vaccine research, but the US's retreat leaves a major gap.

PART 2

65 Destabilising global trust

Perhaps most troubling is the messaging. Kennedy has repeatedly questioned the need for childhood vaccines, spread misinformation, inflated the risks and downplayed the threat of measles.

70 He has also attacked medical journals as corrupt and threatened to bar government scientists from publishing in respected outlets such as *The Lancet* and *The New England Journal of Medicine* — two of the world's most prestigious peer-reviewed journals. Instead, he has proposed state-run alternatives. His own review on Aluminium Hydroxide was published in a non-peer-reviewed outlet.

75 In just a few months as health secretary, Kennedy has reshaped vaccine policy and public trust in the US. He has repeatedly claimed that the scientific and medical

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establishment is corrupt and that consensus cannot be trusted. This rhetoric is especially dangerous at a time when vaccine uptake is already low and falling.

80 But the consequences don't stop at national borders. When coverage drops in one country, the risk of disease outbreaks increases globally, as seen in the recent measles outbreak in Canada.

Kennedy has shown both determination and ingenuity in undermining vaccine science, often through methods that are complex, obscure, or hard to explain publicly. Without issuing a single ban, he has weakened the foundations of vaccine availability and trust in the US.

85 In the 19th century, the average life expectancy in the US was around 40 years . Many children died of infections that are now preventable. In an age when the deadly realities of diseases like measles have faded from memory, it's chilling to consider the possibility of returning to a pre-vaccine era.

PART 1

- 1) What is the main argument defended by the journalist?
- 2) True or False: Justify by reading the text
 - a) Kennedy has banned a few vaccines
 - b) Before being appointed, Kennedy had promised to maintain and use the same scientific norms and criteria
 - c) Kennedy has banned thimerosal from vaccines
 - d) Kennedy has banned aluminium salts from vaccines
- 3) What is the ACIP and what is its role?
- 4) What has happened to the ACIP, what is Kennedy's role in the change and what is/are the consequence(s)?

PART 2

- 1) What are The Lancet and The New England Journal of Medicine? Why has Kennedy attacked them?
- 2) What does "peer-reviewed" mean?
- 3) In your own words, explain why Kennedy's attitude will have an impact outside the US.

Going further: In early December, Kennedy's advisory panel made a new recommendation concerning hepatitis B vaccines, find out what it is.

Document 4

« Make America Healthy Again » : derrière Robert F. Kennedy Jr, une tentative de coalition multiforme

Par [Lyssia Gingsins](#), le 26 septembre 2025, *Le Monde*

Alors que sur les conseils de son secrétaire à la santé, Robert F. Kennedy Jr, le président américain, Donald Trump, a lié, lundi 22 septembre, la prise de paracétamol par les femmes enceintes à la hausse des cas d'autisme chez les enfants, les

5 initiatives de « RFK » ne font pas l'unanimité, y compris au sein du camp républicain. Bill Cassidy, sénateur républicain de Louisiane et président du comité du Sénat sur la santé, a déclaré sur X que « la prépondérance des preuves montre que ce n'est pas le cas ». « Vous allez changer une directive médicale sans vous baser sur la science ? Je veux dire, vous allez construire un pont sans vous baser sur la physique ? », s'est-il interrogé

10 sur le site d'informations américain *The Hill*. M. Cassidy fait aussi partie du groupe d'élus qui ont critiqué le limogeage brutal, le 27 août, de Susan Monarez, la directrice des Centres de prévention et de lutte contre les maladies (CDC).

C'est en réponse à ces critiques que l'organisation à but non lucratif MAHA Action, pour « Make America Healthy Again » (« rendre sa santé à l'Amérique »), lancée à l'initiative du

15 secrétaire à la santé, a annoncé organiser, samedi 27 septembre, des rassemblements dans une dizaine de villes américaines.

Depuis qu'il a rejoint la plateforme de Donald Trump, en août 2024, M. Kennedy a cherché à créer un mouvement autour de la santé des Américains. Il a rassemblé sous le nom de « MAHA » une galaxie éclectique, qui inclut des influenceuses en nutrition,

20 des militants antivaccins et des figures de la droite conservatrice américaine. Lui-même a animé pendant près de dix ans une association antivaccin.

Militants antivaccin

L'organisation MAHA Action est ainsi dirigée par des proches de M. Kennedy, dont l'éditeur de son livre, Tony Lyons, et le militant antivaccin de longue date Del Bigtree,

25 vidéaste et directeur d'un important groupe antivaccination.

Le secrétaire à la santé s'appuie également sur Calley et Casey Means, un frère et une sœur devenus ses conseillers. Casey Means, proposée par Trump pour devenir administratrice de la santé publique (Surgeon General), a

30 suivi une formation de chirurgie à l'université Stanford, qu'elle a abandonnée pour se concentrer sur la santé « intégrative » et devenir influenceuse. Son frère, Calley Means, se présente comme un « lobbyiste repent » de l'industrie pharmaceutique et agroalimentaire.

Le duo, très suivi sur Instagram, a été accusé de conflits d'intérêts : chacun a cofondé une entreprise dans le secteur médical. Pour Casey, il

35 s'agit de Levels, une entreprise d'appareils biomédicaux portables ; Calley, lui, a créé Truemed, une entreprise qui produit des certificats médicaux pour faire couvrir par les assurances-santé des produits de bien-être, comme des matelas ou des vélos.

Les « mamans MAHA »

40 Au-delà de ses proches, RFK s'est entouré de militants sur les réseaux sociaux, dont la plupart sont des femmes, les « MAHA moms » : des influenceuses et mères de famille qui mettent en avant la capacité du secrétaire à protéger la santé de leurs enfants.

C'est le cas de Vani Hari, 46 ans, qui réunit 2,3 millions d'abonnés sur Instagram et tient depuis une décennie le blog « The Food Babe ». L'influenceuse y dénonce avec virulence l'industrie agroalimentaire, en mélangeant des discours de bon sens et des propos
45 pseudoscientifiques, voire complotistes. D'autres poussent les discours douteux encore plus loin, comme Liana Werner-Gray, qui prétend avoir guéri d'un cancer lymphatique par un changement de régime alimentaire et une cure de « détox ».

Parmi les invitées régulières des événements MAHA, plusieurs figures sont des habituées de l'univers trumpiste ou des médias d'extrême droite. Parmi elles, Marla
50 Maples, l'ex-femme de Donald Trump. Mais aussi Alex Clark et Caitlin Sinclair, des militantes de l'organisation Turning Point USA fondée par Charlie Kirk, assassiné dans l'Utah le 10 septembre, ou encore Mikhaila Peterson Fuller, la fille du psychologue ultraconservateur Jordan Peterson, qui prétend avoir guéri d'une maladie chronique par un régime entièrement carné.

55 Le club des influenceuses MAHA compte aussi des figures qui se réclamaient du progressisme californien avant de devenir des soutiens de Donald Trump, comme la blogueuse Jessica Reed Kraus ou la coach de télé-réalité Jillian Michaels.

Le libertarianisme médical « accède au pouvoir pour la première fois »

60 En ligne, la porosité entre la droite ultraconservatrice et des discours plutôt issus de la culture hippie semble encore plus prononcée : les journaux américains ont ainsi été nombreux à commenter les profils des « crunchy moms » sur les réseaux sociaux. Celles-ci se filment dans leur quotidien de femme au foyer en reprenant des obsessions de M. Kennedy : aliments bio, pain fait maison... mais aussi lait cru et gras de bœuf.

65 Derrière ces discours affleure une idéologie ancrée de longue date dans l'histoire américaine : le libertarianisme médical, explique Lewis A. Grossman, professeur de droit à l'American University, à Washington, DC. Cette idéologie, qui s'est incarnée dès le XIXe siècle dans des mobilisations pour la « liberté de choix thérapeutique », « accède au pouvoir pour la première fois avec M. Kennedy », souligne
70 M. Grossman.

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Cette rhétorique antiexpertise et antimodernité est marginale dans l'après-guerre, mais la confiance des Américains envers les institutions médicales se dégrade durant les années 1970 en raison de crises politiques et scientifiques. D'après l'institut de sondage Harris, 73 % des Américains, en 1966, font « très confiance » aux décisions des décideurs médicaux ; en 1980, ils ne sont plus que 34 %, taux qui a ensuite stagné jusqu'aux années 2010. En 2025, l'institut rapportait que seuls 24 % des Américains interrogés avaient une confiance forte dans les institutions médicales, tandis que 20 % n'avaient pas confiance « du tout ».

M. Kennedy, qui a affiché sa volonté de réformer un système médical « corrompu », publie désormais sur Instagram ses « victoires ». Mais celles-ci restent assez marginales : son dernier « rapport MAHA », un document stratégique consacré à la santé des enfants, a ainsi épargné le secteur de l'agro-industrie, préférant l'interdiction d'une poignée de colorants alimentaires à la régulation des aliments ultratransformés. En revanche, la fragilisation du système vaccinal s'annonce, elle, bien réelle. Le 19 août, les membres du comité consultatif sur les pratiques de vaccination, nommés par M. Kennedy, ont voté pour ne plus recommander le vaccin contre le Covid-19 à tous les adultes.

- 1) In your own words, explain what MAHA is and why it is controversial.
- 2) In your own words, explain what American health libertarianism is and why it is growing in popularity.
- 3) Why does the journalist claim that Kennedy's victories remain marginal?