Behind the Claims

Weigh evidence before recommending a school change

11.RL.24 "Evaluate the credibility of sources in terms of authority, relevance, accuracy, and purpose. a. Assess the usefulness of written information to answer a research question, solve a problem, or take a position."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline who produced each source, circle details that strengthen or limit its evidence, and number the sources from most to least useful for answering the council's research question.

Will Refill Stations Reduce Bottle Waste?

1. At Brookfield High, the student council is deciding whether to recommend two bottle-refill stations. Its research question is: Would the stations meaningfully reduce single-use plastic bottle waste at school? For five school days, custodians recorded 312 disposable bottles in cafeteria trash. Their log names each date and count, making the total checkable, but it excludes hallway bins and bottles taken home. The log establishes a baseline, not what would happen after installation. A facilities manager also inspected two proposed sites and confirmed that water lines were nearby. Her memo says nothing about how many students would use the stations.

2. A refill-station manufacturer's brochure promises that schools can "cut bottle waste by 90 percent." It supplies no school names, measurement period, or definition of waste. The company sells the stations, so its purpose matters, although a sales motive alone does not prove a claim false. A district research office offers a different kind of evidence: its report compares cafeteria bottle counts at three neighboring schools for one semester before and one semester after stations were installed. It reports an average 18 percent decrease and publishes each school's counts. Two schools also stopped selling bottled water during that period.

3. A student council poll found that 83 of 100 respondents would use a refill station, but volunteers answered at an environmental club fair. Because the council wants the proposal approved, it may emphasize favorable answers; the sampling site also leaves out many students. The poll measures stated intentions, not discarded bottles. Taken together, the custodian log and district report offer more direct evidence about waste than either the poll or brochure, yet neither predicts Brookfield's exact reduction. Before making a recommendation, the council could ask for a trial with cafeteria counts collected before and after, while tracking any changes in bottled-water sales.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How useful is the custodians' log for answering the research question? Identify one strength and one limitation.

2. Should the council treat the brochure's 90 percent claim as dependable evidence? Explain using its purpose and one missing detail.

3. What makes the district report more checkable than the brochure, and why can't its 18 percent decrease be attributed entirely to refill stations?

4. Which source better addresses whether stations can be installed, the student poll or the facilities memo? Why does neither establish how much bottle waste will fall?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write an 80 to 110 word recommendation to Brookfield's principal about whether to run a refill-station trial. Use evidence from two different sources, assess a strength or limitation of each, and identify one measurement the trial should collect.

ANSWER KEY

Behind the Claims

GRADE 11 · 11.RL.24

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline who produced each source, circle details that strengthen or limit its evidence, and number the sources from most to least useful for answering the council's research question. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How useful is the custodians' log for answering the research question? Identify one strength and one limitation.	**It provides dated, checkable counts of bottles in Brookfield's cafeteria trash, but it misses bottles discarded elsewhere and cannot predict the effect of stations.**
2	Should the council treat the brochure's 90 percent claim as dependable evidence? Explain using its purpose and one missing detail.	**No. The manufacturer wants to sell stations, and the brochure omits details needed to assess the claim, such as the schools measured or the measurement period.**
3	What makes the district report more checkable than the brochure, and why can't its 18 percent decrease be attributed entirely to refill stations?	**The report publishes each school's before-and-after counts. Two schools also stopped selling bottled water, which could have contributed to the decrease.**
4	Which source better addresses whether stations can be installed, the student poll or the facilities memo? Why does neither establish how much bottle waste will fall?	**The facilities memo addresses installation because the manager inspected the sites and confirmed nearby water lines. It does not measure use or waste, while the poll measures intentions from a limited group rather than discarded bottles.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I recommend a trial with one refill station before committing to two. The custodians' dated log counts 312 disposable bottles in cafeteria trash over five days, a useful local baseline, but it misses bottles discarded elsewhere. The district report publishes before-and-after counts from three schools, which makes its 18 percent decrease more checkable than the manufacturer's unsupported claim. Still, two of those schools also stopped selling bottled water, so stations may not explain the decrease. During a trial, Brookfield should count cafeteria bottles before and after installation and record any changes in bottled-water sales.

Accept different source rankings and recommendations when students distinguish what each source can establish from what it cannot. For Part 3, check that the response is 80 to 110 words and evaluates two sources rather than merely citing them.