Before the Vote

Weigh written evidence for a school decision

12.RL.24.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 two details that make a source useful for the council's decision, circle two limits on what the evidence can show, and put a star beside the source you would rely on most.

What Would Help Riverside Decide?

1. Riverside High's student council asks: Should the school replace its bottled-water vending machine with two refill stations next year? The decision involves safe water, dependable access, student use, and cost. A state-certified laboratory tested water from six Riverside hallway taps in September 2025. Its signed report lists the collection sites, testing method, and lead measurements, each below 1 microgram per liter. Those details make the report useful for judging the sampled taps on that date. It does not show whether the fountains work during lunch, what installation would cost, or whether water quality changes later.

2. The district facilities office offers a different kind of evidence. Its maintenance log records that two existing fountains were out of service for nine school days last semester. An attached contractor estimate prices two refill stations at $8,400 to install, but excludes future filter replacements. The log directly addresses access at Riverside, while the estimate supplies only part of the price. Neither document establishes how often the proposed stations would break down. Because the office would manage the stations, its figures deserve scrutiny, yet its dated service records and itemized estimate can be checked.

3. A bottled-water company's flyer claims that 72 percent of teenagers prefer bottled water, citing an unnamed national poll with no sample size or questions. The company profits if vending stays, and its claim says little about Riverside students. In contrast, a student council online poll received 140 voluntary responses from a school of 1,200. Ninety respondents said they would use a refill station weekly. This local result may help predict interest, but students who chose to respond may differ from those who did not. Neither poll measures actual future use, so treating either as a forecast would overstate its usefulness.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the laboratory report help answer the council's question, and what can it not establish?

2. What does each facilities document contribute to the decision, and what important information is still missing?

3. Which poll is more relevant to Riverside students? Explain why neither poll can reliably predict how many students will use the stations.

4. Choose two sources you would use to advise the council. What distinct part of the decision does each help you assess?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Before the vote, recommend one new piece of written evidence the council should obtain. In one paragraph, explain what it should include and how it would address a gap in the current sources.

ANSWER KEY

Before the Vote

GRADE 12 · 12.RL.24.a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details that make a source useful for the council's decision, circle two limits on what the evidence can show, and put a star beside the source you would rely on most. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the laboratory report help answer the council's question, and what can it not establish?	**Its documented tests provide evidence about lead in six school taps on one date. It cannot establish future water quality, fountain access, or cost.**
2	What does each facilities document contribute to the decision, and what important information is still missing?	**The maintenance log shows past access problems, and the contractor estimate gives an installation price. Neither predicts the new stations' reliability, and the estimate omits future filter costs.**
3	Which poll is more relevant to Riverside students? Explain why neither poll can reliably predict how many students will use the stations.	**The student council poll is more relevant because it surveyed Riverside students. Its voluntary respondents may not represent the school, while the company flyer gives no methods for its national poll. Neither measures future use.**
4	Choose two sources you would use to advise the council. What distinct part of the decision does each help you assess?	**For example, the laboratory report helps assess the sampled taps' water quality, while the facilities log helps assess past access problems at Riverside. Other pairs are acceptable if each source's distinct use is supported by the passage.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The council should request a written five-year cost projection from the district finance office. It should list filter replacement schedules and prices, expected repair costs, and any vending revenue the school would lose. The office should identify the records and assumptions behind its figures. This projection would address costs omitted from the installation estimate and help the council compare the options.

Accept different source choices when students connect specific passage details to the decision and recognize relevant limits. For the open task, look for a feasible written source that fills an identified evidence gap.