When Lights Matter

Trace how research supports a practical recommendation

12.RL.27 "Synthesize research results, using responsible, ethical practices to gather information, and write clear, coherent products demonstrating command of language that is suitable for the target audience and purpose."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two claims supported by named sources, circle two limits on what the evidence can show, and number two recommended actions so you can trace how the writer moves from research to a proposal.

A Lighting Trial for Migrating Birds

1. To the school facilities committee: Our campus cannot move off a migration route, but it can change how its windows and outdoor lights operate at night. BirdCast's Migration Dashboard, a project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and partners, uses weather radar to estimate how many birds migrate over a selected county after dark. Those county estimates show when migration is active, not how many birds pass our building or strike its glass. I would use the dashboard to choose evenings for a trial, rather than present its regional estimates as a count of campus collisions.

2. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service explains that artificial light can attract and disorient migrating birds, increasing their collision risk near buildings. That guidance supports reducing unnecessary light, but it does not prove that our school's windows have caused any collisions. A second concern matters too: staff and visitors need safe routes after evening events. DarkSky International and the Illuminating Engineering Society's Five Principles for Responsible Outdoor Lighting recommend lighting only where needed and using controls to limit when it operates. Together, these sources support a narrower plan than switching off every exterior fixture.

3. For a four-week trial during fall migration, I recommend turning off empty classroom lights after dusk, keeping entrance and walkway lights on, and adding timers where practical. The facilities committee could compare electricity use before and during the trial, while volunteers record any bird collisions they observe using the same procedure each morning. Records should include days with no observed collisions, and a brief report should distinguish observations from conclusions. If collision reports fall, that pattern alone would not establish that lighting caused the change. This proposal draws on named sources without copying their wording or inventing campus data.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How do the BirdCast dashboard and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service guidance serve different roles in the writer's proposal?

2. Why would it be misleading to report BirdCast's county estimates as the number of birds that struck the school?

3. How does the writer combine the lighting principles with the need for safe routes after events?

4. If volunteers observe fewer collisions during the trial, what could the committee report, and what conclusion should it avoid?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 75 to 100 word email to student organizers of an upcoming evening concert proposing a bird-conscious lighting plan. Use at least two named sources from the passage, explain one limit of the evidence, and include a practical measure for visitors' safety without inventing local data.

ANSWER KEY

When Lights Matter

GRADE 12 · 12.RL.27

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two claims supported by named sources, circle two limits on what the evidence can show, and number two recommended actions so you can trace how the writer moves from research to a proposal. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do the BirdCast dashboard and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service guidance serve different roles in the writer's proposal?	**BirdCast helps identify evenings when county-level migration is active. The agency's guidance explains why reducing unnecessary light on those evenings might lower collision risk.**
2	Why would it be misleading to report BirdCast's county estimates as the number of birds that struck the school?	**The dashboard estimates migration over a county, not birds passing the school or colliding with its windows.**
3	How does the writer combine the lighting principles with the need for safe routes after events?	**The proposal turns off unnecessary classroom lights but keeps entrance and walkway lights on, limiting light without leaving routes unlit.**
4	If volunteers observe fewer collisions during the trial, what could the committee report, and what conclusion should it avoid?	**It could report the recorded decrease in observed collisions. It should not claim that the lighting changes caused the decrease, since the observations alone cannot establish cause.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Dear event organizers, For the upcoming evening concert, please keep the route between the auditorium and bus pickup lit, but turn off decorative floodlights after guests leave. BirdCast's Migration Dashboard can help you check whether migration is active in our county. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service explains why reducing unnecessary light may protect migrating birds. A county estimate cannot tell us whether birds will strike our auditorium windows. Ask volunteers to note any collisions they observe, including evenings with none, so our report separates observations from claims about cause.

Accept other accurate source-based links and reasonable lighting plans. The email should attribute at least two sources, acknowledge a limit of the evidence, and avoid claiming that unobserved local collisions occurred.