Check the Claim

Weigh sources before repeating a school news claim.

8.RL.23 "Determine the relevance, reliability, and validity of information from nonfiction and fictional printed and/or digital texts."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each source Maya finds, and circle a detail that helps you judge what that source can prove. Number the two details that most directly test the message board's claim about scores.

Did the Extra Hour Help?

1. At fictional Cedar Ridge Middle School, the library stayed open one extra hour on Tuesdays during the spring term. Soon, an unsigned post on a student message board claimed, "The extra hour raised reading scores by 20 percent." Its only evidence was the writer's claim that the library looked crowded. Maya, a student reporter, wanted to check the claim before repeating it in the school paper. She gathered three sources: a library notice, a printed district score report, and a student survey.

2. The notice on the school's website listed the new Tuesday hours and carried the librarian's name and a posting date. That makes it useful for checking when the schedule changed, but it says nothing about scores. The printed district report showed that 72 percent of students met the reading benchmark the year before the change, compared with 74 percent in the spring term. The report explained how the district counted students and used the same benchmark both times. It did not record which students visited the library.

3. Maya's survey asked 25 students who used the extra hour whether they felt more prepared for reading class. Eighteen said yes. The survey reports feelings from a small group, not scores for every student. Also, the score report shows a rise of two percentage points, not 20 percent. Even that rise cannot be credited to library hours alone: the report does not compare students who attended with those who did not. Maya can report that hours expanded and scores rose, but she cannot say one caused the other.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What can the library notice verify, and why is it not enough to check the post's score claim?

2. Which is more reliable for checking scores, the unsigned post or the district report? Give one reason from the passage.

3. Does the district report support the post's claim that scores rose by 20 percent? Use its numbers to explain.

4. Why can't Maya use the survey and score report to conclude that the extra hour caused scores to rise?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A classmate suggests the headline “Most Cedar Ridge Students Used the New Library Hour.” Write three sentences explaining whether Maya's sources support it, naming one source that falls short, and describing new evidence that could test it.

ANSWER KEY

Check the Claim

GRADE 8 · 8.RL.23

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each source Maya finds, and circle a detail that helps you judge what that source can prove. Number the two details that most directly test the message board's claim about scores. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What can the library notice verify, and why is it not enough to check the post's score claim?	**It verifies the change in Tuesday hours, but it gives no information about reading scores.**
2	Which is more reliable for checking scores, the unsigned post or the district report? Give one reason from the passage.	**The district report is more reliable because it explains how students were counted and uses the same benchmark for both years.**
3	Does the district report support the post's claim that scores rose by 20 percent? Use its numbers to explain.	**No. The share meeting the benchmark rose from 72 percent to 74 percent, an increase of two percentage points.**
4	Why can't Maya use the survey and score report to conclude that the extra hour caused scores to rise?	**The survey measured feelings among 25 students who used the hour, not their scores. The report does not compare scores of students who used the hour with scores of those who did not.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Maya's sources do not show whether most Cedar Ridge students used the extra hour. Her survey includes only 25 students who used it, so it cannot show what share of all students attended. She would need a count of individual students who attended during the spring term and the school's total enrollment.

For the marking job, accept the score percentages and the report's lack of attendance data as the two numbered details. For Your Turn, accept any feasible way to count distinct attendees and compare that number with total enrollment.