# Source Detective Notes

Check sources, use ideas fairly, and record where they came from.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.8** "Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources; assess the credibility of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and providing basic bibliographic information..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

## 1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Circle details that make a source credible, underline the direct quotation, and number the four pieces of bibliographic information you find. These marks show how a writer chooses and uses sources responsibly.

### Maya Researches City Trees

(1) For a report about shade trees, Maya began with two sources. The Riverton Parks Department's 2024 Tree Canopy Report listed 18,400 public trees and explained that crews inspect them each year. The report gave an authoring agency, a date, and data gathered by city staff. Maya also found a post on a neighborhood social media page claiming that the city had cut down "most of its trees." The post named no author, date, evidence, or original source. Maya decided the city report was more credible for counting public trees.

(2) Next, Maya needed information about cooling. A fact sheet from the State University Extension, dated 2023, said, "Shade from trees can lower surface temperatures." It named its writers and linked to research studies. Maya copied the exact sentence into her notes with quotation marks. She also wrote this paraphrase: Tree shade can make pavement and other surfaces less hot. She used her own words and kept the same meaning. Under both notes, she recorded basic source information: State University Extension, "Benefits of Urban Trees," 2023, and the web address.

(3) Before writing, Maya compared the sources to her report question. The parks report was useful for the number of public trees, but it did not measure temperatures. The university fact sheet was useful for explaining cooling because it cited research, though it did not describe Riverton alone. Maya left out the social media claim because she could not check it. In her report, she used the city number as a paraphrase and quoted the university fact sheet. Her bibliography listed each source's author or organization, title, date, and web address.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which source was best for finding the number of public trees? Give two details that made it credible.

2. Why did Maya leave out the social media claim from her report?

3. How did Maya use the university fact sheet without plagiarizing? Give two actions she took.

4. Why did Maya use both the parks report and the university fact sheet in her report?

## 3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a question about your school or community. Gather information from two print or digital sources, identify which source is more credible and why, then write one paraphrase or short quotation with basic bibliography information for both sources.

**ANSWER KEY**

# Source Detective Notes

**GRADE 6 · W.6.8**

## PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle details that make a source credible, underline the direct quotation, and number the four pieces of bibliographic information you find. These marks show how a writer chooses and uses sources responsibly. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

## PART 2 · ANSWERS

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Which source was best for finding the number of public trees? Give two details that made it credible. | **The Riverton Parks Department's 2024 Tree Canopy Report. It named the authoring agency, gave a date, and used data gathered by city staff.** |
| 2 | Why did Maya leave out the social media claim from her report? | **The post had no named author, date, evidence, or original source, so Maya could not check the claim.** |
| 3 | How did Maya use the university fact sheet without plagiarizing? Give two actions she took. | **She put the exact copied sentence in quotation marks, and she wrote a paraphrase in her own words while keeping the original meaning.** |
| 4 | Why did Maya use both the parks report and the university fact sheet in her report? | **The parks report provided the number of public trees, while the university fact sheet explained how tree shade cools surfaces. Each source was useful for a different part of her question.** |

## PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Question: How many planets orbit the Sun? NASA is the more credible source because its science experts study space, and Encyclopaedia Britannica is a second reliable reference. Paraphrase: NASA explains that eight planets orbit the Sun. Sources: NASA, "The Planets in Our Solar System," n.d., https://science.nasa.gov/solar-system/planets/; Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Solar System," n.d., https://www.britannica.com/science/solar-system.

Accept equivalent evidence-based explanations of credibility, relevance, paraphrasing, and source limits. For the open task, accept different topics and sources if the student evaluates credibility, avoids copying, and includes author or organization, title, date when available, and a source location.