

Research Routes

Trace how a focused question leads to useful evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.7 "Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the three sources the team uses, circle the focused questions they generate, and number the four checks they use to judge sources. These marks show how researchers build and evaluate a short investigation.

Shade at the Bus Stop

- ① A student research team asked, "How can our town make bus stops safer during extreme heat?" They began with three different sources: a city map showing locations of bus stops, a public-health webpage about heat illness, and interviews with riders waiting after school. The map showed that many stops lacked shade. The health source explained that heat can cause dizziness and dehydration. Interviews added details the other sources could not show, including how long riders stood in direct sun and whether they avoided certain stops.
- ② Instead of stopping there, the team generated focused questions. Which stops have the highest afternoon temperatures? Could trees, shelters, or shade sails lower those temperatures? How much would each option cost, and who would maintain it? These questions opened several paths for research. Students could compare temperature readings at shaded and unshaded stops, examine city budget documents, and contact the transit department about maintenance. Each question was narrow enough to investigate, but together they helped the team explore practical solutions rather than simply proving that hot bus stops are uncomfortable.
- ③ To reach a conclusion, the team would need to judge the sources, not just collect them. A city map is useful for locating stops, but it may not show recent construction. A health webpage from a government agency can explain risks, yet it cannot reveal conditions at one stop. Rider interviews provide local experiences, although a few interviews may not represent every rider. By checking dates, authors, evidence, and limits, students can combine reliable information. Their final claim might recommend a pilot shade project at the hottest stops and explain what further evidence officials should gather.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What is the team's main research question, and what three sources do they use to investigate it?

2 Choose one focused question from paragraph 2. Which research path in the passage could help answer it?

3 Why do the rider interviews add useful evidence that the map and health webpage cannot provide?

4 What four things should students check when judging a source, and why is this step important?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose a school or community issue. Write an 80-110 word mini research plan that includes one research question, three different sources, three focused follow-up questions that open different paths, and one sentence explaining how you will check a source's reliability.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the three sources the team uses, circle the focused questions they generate, and number the four checks they use to judge sources. These marks show how researchers build and evaluate a short investigation. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is the team's main research question, and what three sources do they use to investigate it?	Main question: How can the town make bus stops safer during extreme heat? Sources: a city map, a public-health webpage, and interviews with riders.
2	Choose one focused question from paragraph 2. Which research path in the passage could help answer it?	Answers may include: highest afternoon temperatures, compare temperature readings; cost of each option, examine city budget documents; maintenance responsibility, contact the transit department.
3	Why do the rider interviews add useful evidence that the map and health webpage cannot provide?	Interviews provide local experiences, such as how long riders stand in direct sun and whether they avoid certain stops.
4	What four things should students check when judging a source, and why is this step important?	Students should check dates, authors, evidence, and limits. This helps them combine reliable information and recognize what each source cannot show.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Research question: How could our school reduce food waste at lunch? I will use cafeteria waste records, interviews with cafeteria staff, and a nonprofit report about school food recovery. How much unopened food is discarded each week? Which foods do students leave most often? What local groups can accept safe, unopened food? These questions lead to measurement, student choices, and community partnerships. I will check the report's author, publication date, evidence, and purpose before using its claims.

Accept equivalent explanations that accurately connect a focused question to an appropriate research path. For Part 3, accept varied topics when the response includes all required parts, focused questions, and a realistic reliability check.