

Lights, Birds, Evidence

Evaluate claims, reasoning, and evidence in an informational argument.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.9b "Apply grade 8 Reading standards to literary nonfiction (e.g., "Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient..."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the central claim. Number the three pieces of evidence in paragraph 2, then circle the one detail that does not help prove or explain the claim.

A Safer Night Sky

- ① Each spring and fall, millions of birds migrate at night across North America. In Chicago, many are drawn off course by bright building lights, especially during cloudy weather. The city should require large buildings to turn off decorative and unnecessary indoor lights from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m. during peak migration weeks. This policy would make the skyline safer for birds while allowing essential safety lighting to remain on. It would also give building managers a clear, seasonal schedule.
- ② Evidence supports the proposal. A 2014 study in *The Condor* estimated that collisions with buildings kill 365 million to 988 million birds each year in the United States. Lights can attract or disorient night-migrating birds, increasing the chance that they strike glass or walls. Chicago's Lights Out program asks participating buildings to reduce lighting during migration, showing that a seasonal schedule can be used in a major city. Because the policy targets only certain hours and weeks, it does not demand darkness all year.
- ③ Turning down lights can help people, too. Birds that collide with windows may be injured or killed, and volunteers must collect them from sidewalks. Lower lighting may also reduce electricity use, although savings will vary by building. Opponents might argue that dimmer buildings look less impressive at night. However, the proposal protects only limited migration periods, so regular lighting can return afterward. Chicago's official flag has four red stars, each representing a major event in the city's history. The policy could begin as a one-year trial and be reviewed afterward.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What is the author's central claim?

2 Name two pieces of evidence from paragraph 2. How does each piece connect to the central claim?

3 Does paragraph 2 fully prove that the proposed policy will reduce bird collisions in every building? Explain your evaluation.

4 Which sentence gives irrelevant evidence or information? Explain why it does not support the argument.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a three-sentence mini-argument for a community policy. State a claim, include one relevant fact labeled [R], and include one detail that does not support the claim labeled [I].

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the central claim. Number the three pieces of evidence in paragraph 2, then circle the one detail that does not help prove or explain the claim. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is the author's central claim?	Chicago should require large buildings to turn off decorative and unnecessary lights during peak bird-migration weeks.
2	Name two pieces of evidence from paragraph 2. How does each piece connect to the central claim?	The building-collision estimate shows that bird deaths are a large problem, and the explanation that lights attract or disorient migrants connects lighting to collisions. The Lights Out program also supports the idea that a seasonal lighting schedule is possible.
3	Does paragraph 2 fully prove that the proposed policy will reduce bird collisions in every building? Explain your evaluation.	No. It gives relevant evidence about the problem, the effect of lights, and the feasibility of a seasonal schedule, but it gives no results showing that the policy reduced collisions in every building.
4	Which sentence gives irrelevant evidence or information? Explain why it does not support the argument.	The sentence about Chicago's flag having four red stars is irrelevant because it does not connect to bird migration, building lights, or the proposed policy.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our school should place compost bins beside cafeteria trash cans. [R] Food scraps such as fruit peels can be composted instead of sent to a landfill. [I] The cafeteria walls are painted blue.

Accept equivalent statements of the central claim and evidence evaluations that accurately distinguish relevant support from unrelated information. For Part 3, accept any logical policy claim with one genuinely relevant fact and one clearly unrelated detail, correctly labeled.