

Source Trail

Evaluate evidence before it enters a research claim.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12.8 “Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the specific task, purpose, and audience...”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each detail that describes a source's strength or limitation. Circle each parenthetical citation, then write 1 and 2 beside the two sources Maya uses in her final paragraph.

Mapping Heat, Choosing Evidence

- ① To investigate why some neighborhoods feel hotter than others, Maya narrowed her question to summer surface temperatures and tree canopy in her city. She used the search string “tree canopy” “land surface temperature” site:.gov filetype:pdf, which returned government reports rather than general blogs. A city planning map showed where canopy was sparse, but its data were from 2018. Maya kept it for local context and looked for a newer source to support a claim about heat. She rejected a landscaping company's article because it promoted its services and gave no methods or data sources.
- ② The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Heat Island Compendium explains that trees and vegetation can reduce surface and air temperatures through shade and evapotranspiration (U.S. EPA, 2008). Because the agency summarizes research for public decision makers, Maya used it to explain the mechanism, not to prove conditions on one block. She paired it with a 2024 city planning map that displayed current canopy coverage by neighborhood (City Planning Department, 2024). The map gave local evidence, but it did not measure residents' health or indoor temperatures. Using both sources let Maya connect a general scientific explanation to a current, local pattern without claiming more than either source could show.
- ③ Her paragraph did not stack quotations. She wrote, “Neighborhoods with less canopy may face greater heat exposure because trees provide shade and cool air through evapotranspiration” (U.S. EPA, 2008). She then added the map's canopy finding in her own words and cited the map (City Planning Department, 2024). The EPA source supplied a broad explanation, while the map supplied current local evidence. This selective pairing kept her claim focused and made it possible for readers to trace each idea. Her reference list gave full publication details for both sources in APA style.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 What two search features helped Maya target government PDF reports?

2 Why was the 2018 planning map not strong enough to be Maya's only support for a claim about current heat?

3 What different job did each of Maya's final two sources perform?

4 Name two moves Maya made in her final paragraph that helped her avoid plagiarism or overreliance on one source.

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Choose a focused environmental question and use an advanced search with a quoted phrase plus site: or filetype:. In 40 to 60 words, write one evidence-based claim that combines two authoritative sources, includes two APA-style parenthetical citations, and states one strength or limitation of one source.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each detail that describes a source's strength or limitation. Circle each parenthetical citation, then write 1 and 2 beside the two sources Maya uses in her final paragraph. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What two search features helped Maya target government PDF reports?	She used site:.gov and filetype:pdf.
2	Why was the 2018 planning map not strong enough to be Maya's only support for a claim about current heat?	Its data were from 2018, so it was not current.
3	What different job did each of Maya's final two sources perform?	The EPA source explained how trees cool air and surfaces, while the 2024 planning map provided current local canopy evidence.
4	Name two moves Maya made in her final paragraph that helped her avoid plagiarism or overreliance on one source.	She used her own words for the map finding, cited both sources, and combined a broad explanation with local evidence. Any two are acceptable.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Search: "lead service lines" site:.gov filetype:pdf. Replacing lead service lines can reduce a major route of childhood lead exposure, though household filters may still matter (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency [EPA], 2024; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2024). EPA explains regulations, while CDC's health guidance does not measure conditions in one local water system.

Accept varied topics and claims when the response is 40 to 60 words, uses two authoritative sources, includes readable APA-style parenthetical citations, and evaluates one source's fit or limitation. The cited information should be integrated into a single focused claim rather than copied or listed separately.