Evidence Without Hype

Notice how a scientific model uses precise, careful language.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.6-8.2e "Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline words or phrases that make a claim precise or qualified. Circle sentences that give evidence or explain a limit, because these choices create a formal, objective tone.

Wolves and Yellowstone

1 In 1995 and 1996, wildlife managers released 31 gray wolves into Yellowstone National Park after the species had been absent from the area for about 70 years. The releases were part of a federal recovery program. Biologists monitored the wolves with radio collars and collected data on pack locations, prey, and survival. By 2023, Yellowstone supported several wolf packs. The program provided researchers with long-term information about how a large predator interacts with other parts of an ecosystem.

2 Wolves commonly hunt elk, and elk commonly browse young willow and aspen plants. After wolves returned, researchers recorded changes in elk behavior and numbers in some areas. In certain stream valleys, willow growth increased over time, which created more material for beavers to use in building dams. However, scientists do not treat the wolves as the only cause of every change. Weather, water conditions, hunting outside the park, and other animal populations can also affect vegetation and elk.

3 This set of connected changes is sometimes described as a trophic cascade, a process in which effects move through different levels of a food web. The term does not mean that all ecosystem changes follow one simple path. For example, beaver activity can alter stream flow, and plant growth can respond differently in different locations. Researchers continue to compare measurements across years before drawing conclusions. Their reports use specific evidence and acknowledge limits, rather than claiming that one species completely controls Yellowstone.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Copy the words from paragraph 2 that show scientists do not assign every ecosystem change to wolves.

2. Copy the sentence in paragraph 3 that prevents the term trophic cascade from sounding like an overly simple explanation.

3. What two kinds of evidence did biologists collect or use to study the wolves?

4. Why is the final clause, “rather than claiming that one species completely controls Yellowstone,” more objective than saying, “Wolves control Yellowstone”?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a two-sentence, 40 to 55 word report from these observations: During a four-week count, 18 students used one bike rack. After a second rack was installed, 31 students used the racks. The school did not record why students changed transportation. Use formal language, include both numbers, and state a limit without guessing.

ANSWER KEY

Evidence Without Hype

GRADE 7 · WHST.6-8.2e

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline words or phrases that make a claim precise or qualified. Circle sentences that give evidence or explain a limit, because these choices create a formal, objective tone. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Copy the words from paragraph 2 that show scientists do not assign every ecosystem change to wolves.	**"Scientists do not treat the wolves as the only cause of every change."**
2	Copy the sentence in paragraph 3 that prevents the term trophic cascade from sounding like an overly simple explanation.	**"The term does not mean that all ecosystem changes follow one simple path."**
3	What two kinds of evidence did biologists collect or use to study the wolves?	**They monitored wolves with radio collars and collected data on pack locations, prey, and survival.**
4	Why is the final clause, "rather than claiming that one species completely controls Yellowstone," more objective than saying, "Wolves control Yellowstone"?	**It avoids an absolute claim and explains that researchers use evidence while acknowledging limits.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

During a four-week count, 18 students used the original bike rack, while 31 students used the racks after a second rack was installed. The counts show increased rack use, but the school did not collect information about why students selected their transportation methods.

Accept equivalent quoted language and explanations that identify precise evidence, cautious claims, or acknowledged limits. For the open response, accept two formal, objective sentences of 40 to 55 words that include both numbers and avoid claiming a cause the observations cannot prove.