

Follow the Evidence

Trace how a researcher checks sources and revises a question.

ELA.6.C.4.1 “Conduct research to answer a question, drawing on multiple reliable and valid sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the name or type of each source Maya considers, circle details that show why a source is useful or not useful, and put a 1 beside the sentence where Maya refocuses her inquiry.

A Better Turtle Question

- ① Maya began with the question, “Do streetlights affect sea turtle hatchlings on Harbor Beach?” She first checked a social media post claiming that hatchlings always crawl toward the brightest light. The post named no author, date, or evidence, so Maya did not use it. Instead, she found a state wildlife agency webpage explaining that hatchlings usually move toward the brightest horizon, which is normally moonlight reflected on the ocean. Artificial lights can draw them inland, where they may face roads, predators, or exhaustion.
- ② Next, Maya located a peer-reviewed study in a marine biology journal. The researchers compared hatchling paths on dark beaches and beaches with nearby artificial lights. Their results showed that artificial lighting changed many hatchlings’ travel direction. Maya also read Harbor Beach’s lighting ordinance, a local government document. It requires some beachfront properties to shield or turn off lights during nesting season. This source did not measure hatchling behavior, but it showed that local officials considered the problem important enough to regulate.
- ③ After comparing the sources, Maya could answer part of her question: artificial lights can affect hatchling direction. However, none of her sources counted hatchlings at Harbor Beach or identified which local lights were visible from nests. She refocused her inquiry to ask, “Which lights near Harbor Beach are visible from nesting areas, and when are they on?” To investigate, she planned to use a beach lighting survey from the wildlife agency, the city’s public lighting map, and observations recorded during safe, permitted visits.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 Why did Maya decide not to use the social media post as a source?

2 Which source gives the strongest direct evidence that artificial light can change hatchlings' travel direction? Explain why.

3 Why is Harbor Beach's lighting ordinance useful but not enough to answer Maya's original question?

4 What was Maya's refocused question, and what missing local evidence did it address?

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Write 4 to 6 sentences about a research question that matters at your school or in your community. Name three reliable or valid sources you would use and explain why each source is useful, then describe one evidence gap that could make you refocus your question and write the revised question.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the name or type of each source Maya considers, circle details that show why a source is useful or not useful, and put a 1 beside the sentence where Maya refocuses her inquiry. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did Maya decide not to use the social media post as a source?	The post named no author, date, or evidence, so Maya could not check its claim.
2	Which source gives the strongest direct evidence that artificial light can change hatchlings' travel direction? Explain why.	The peer-reviewed marine biology study, because researchers compared hatchling paths on dark beaches and beaches with artificial lights.
3	Why is Harbor Beach's lighting ordinance useful but not enough to answer Maya's original question?	It shows that local officials regulate beachfront lights, but it did not measure hatchling behavior.
4	What was Maya's refocused question, and what missing local evidence did it address?	She asked which lights near Harbor Beach are visible from nesting areas and when they are on. Her earlier sources did not identify visible local lights or count hatchlings at Harbor Beach.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

My question is, "How does shade on our school playground affect its afternoon temperature?" My sources would be a National Weather Service page, because weather experts publish it, a peer-reviewed study about tree cover and surface temperature, because experts check its methods, and a data table of playground temperatures I collect at the same time with the same thermometer, because the method makes the comparison fair. If these sources do not show how playground surfaces affect heat, I would need more evidence. I would refocus my question to ask, "How do shade and playground surfaces affect afternoon temperature at our school?"

Accept equivalent explanations of source reliability, relevance, and limits when they are supported by the passage. For the open task, accept varied topics if the response includes a focused question, three appropriate sources with reasons, an evidence gap, and a meaningfully revised question.