

Evidence Under Debate

Separate shared evidence from competing explanations.

10.T.T.2.b "Analyze texts with conflicting information or opposing viewpoints and determine where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretations. (I)"

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline observations or measurements that both articles accept. Circle the claims that show Hart and Lee interpreting the evidence differently.

What Changed in Yellowstone?

- ① In 1995 and 1996, wildlife managers released 31 gray wolves into Yellowstone National Park after wolves had been absent from the park for about 70 years. The project aimed to restore a native predator. Since then, researchers have studied changes in elk numbers, plant growth, and other animals. Two recent articles use many of the same observations but reach different conclusions about what wolves changed. Reading both articles requires separating measurements, such as population counts, from explanations about why those measurements changed. It also requires noticing when an author treats one possible cause as the main cause.
- ② Article A, by ecologist Linda Hart, reports that Yellowstone's northern elk herd declined from an estimated 17,000 animals in 1995 to fewer than 8,000 by 2012. Hart also notes that elk changed where and how long they grazed near streams after wolves returned. She argues that wolf predation and elk caution allowed more willow and aspen to grow in some streamside areas. Hart calls the wolves a key driver of recovery, while acknowledging that drought, hunting outside the park, and other factors may have affected elk numbers. Her evidence supports a strong role for wolves, not a claim that they were the only influence.
- ③ Article B, by biologist Marcus Lee, accepts the reported elk decline and the changes in grazing patterns. However, Lee questions whether wolves should receive most of the credit for recovering vegetation. He points out that precipitation varied during the study years and that elk migrating beyond park borders faced hunting. Lee interprets the thicker willow stands as the result of several forces working together, including wolves, weather, and human decisions. He does not deny that wolves affected elk. Instead, he disagrees with Hart's interpretation of their importance. Both writers accept the population data, but they disagree about the best explanation for the ecological changes.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 What population measurement do both Hart and Lee accept?

2 Do Hart and Lee disagree about whether elk changed their grazing patterns after wolves returned? Explain using the passage.

3 How does Hart explain the growth of willow and aspen, and how does Lee explain it?

4 Does Lee claim that wolves had no effect on elk? What interpretation does he actually challenge?

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Use this shared observation: A school garden used 30 percent less water after mulch was added. In two sentences, state the measurement, then give two different interpretations of why water use decreased. Make clear that both writers accept the measurement.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline observations or measurements that both articles accept. Circle the claims that show Hart and Lee interpreting the evidence differently. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What population measurement do both Hart and Lee accept?	They accept that Yellowstone's northern elk herd declined from about 17,000 in 1995 to fewer than 8,000 by 2012.
2	Do Hart and Lee disagree about whether elk changed their grazing patterns after wolves returned? Explain using the passage.	No. Both accept that grazing patterns changed; their disagreement is about what caused the broader vegetation recovery.
3	How does Hart explain the growth of willow and aspen, and how does Lee explain it?	Hart says wolves were a key driver because predation and elk caution reduced grazing. Lee says several forces, including wolves, weather, and human decisions, worked together.
4	Does Lee claim that wolves had no effect on elk? What interpretation does he actually challenge?	No. Lee accepts that wolves affected elk. He challenges Hart's interpretation that wolves deserve most of the credit for vegetation recovery.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Both writers accept that the garden used 30 percent less water after mulch was added. Writer A says mulch was the main cause, while Writer B says cooler weather and changed watering schedules may also explain the decrease.

Accept equivalent descriptions that distinguish shared data from competing explanations. For Part 3, both interpretations must accept the stated measurement, and the second interpretation must offer a plausible additional cause.