

Source Trail

Trace how a researcher finds, checks, and combines evidence.

11.T.RA.2.a "Navigate and use a variety of credible print and digital sources, including academic databases, to locate relevant information about a central argument, topic, or question. (I)"

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each source Maya considers, and number the three sources she combines in her final argument. Circle words that show how she checks a source's credibility or limits.

Mapping Shade and Heat

- ① To investigate which neighborhoods in Riverton need more shade trees, Maya begins with a focused question: Where would new tree planting reduce dangerous summer heat most effectively? She searches the city planning department's map portal for tree-canopy coverage by census tract and downloads its methodology page. Because the portal is maintained by the agency that collected the local data, it can show conditions in Riverton. Maya checks the map's publication date, definitions, and missing-data notes before using it. A news article may introduce the issue, but it is not her strongest source for canopy measurements.
- ② Next, Maya needs evidence about health risk, not just tree cover. Through her school library, she opens an academic database and searches terms such as urban heat, tree canopy, and emergency visits. She selects a peer-reviewed study whose methods explain how researchers compared neighborhood temperatures and health records. The study covers several U.S. cities, so Maya will not treat its findings as a direct measurement of Riverton. Instead, she uses it to explain a plausible connection between shade and health. She records the authors, journal, year, database link, and a short note about what the study can support.
- ③ Finally, Maya looks for a source that can help decide where to act first. She finds daily heat-index observations from a federal weather agency and compares them with the city's canopy map. A nonprofit report ranks Riverton neighborhoods by residents' access to parks, but Maya traces its statistics to see whether they come from public records and whether its criteria are clear. She builds a source log with columns for source, publisher, evidence, date, limits, and likely use. Her emerging argument is not that every low-canopy tract needs the same response. It is that local canopy data, heat data, and carefully limited research together can guide a fairer planting plan.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Which source gives Maya local information about tree-canopy coverage, and why is it useful for her question?

2 How does Maya navigate to an academic source about health risk, and what kind of study does she select?

3 Why does Maya avoid treating the peer-reviewed study as a direct measurement of Riverton?

4 What two checks does Maya make before relying on the nonprofit report's statistics?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose a school or community question you could investigate. In 80 to 100 words, write a source plan that names three credible sources, including one academic database source, explains what each could contribute, and gives one limit or credibility check for each source.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each source Maya considers, and number the three sources she combines in her final argument. Circle words that show how she checks a source's credibility or limits. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which source gives Maya local information about tree-canopy coverage, and why is it useful for her question?	The city planning department's map portal. It provides local canopy coverage by census tract and was maintained by the agency that collected the data.
2	How does Maya navigate to an academic source about health risk, and what kind of study does she select?	She uses her school library to open an academic database and searches terms including urban heat, tree canopy, and emergency visits. She selects a peer-reviewed study with methods explaining its comparison of temperatures and health records.
3	Why does Maya avoid treating the peer-reviewed study as a direct measurement of Riverton?	The study covers several U.S. cities rather than Riverton specifically.
4	What two checks does Maya make before relying on the nonprofit report's statistics?	She checks whether the statistics come from public records and whether the report's criteria are clear.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Question: Should Lakeside High begin 30 minutes later? First, I would use the district transportation office's current bus schedule and budget documents to learn local timing constraints. I would check dates and whether routes include high school riders. Second, I would search ERIC for a peer-reviewed study of later secondary-school start times and attendance. Its results may not match Lakeside's students. Third, I would use the CDC's teen sleep guidance for background on recommended sleep, checking the publication date. Together, the local records, academic research, and health guidance would support a realistic recommendation.

Accept equivalent descriptions of the city map portal, academic database study, federal weather data, and nonprofit report checks. For Part 3, accept different credible source combinations if the response includes a focused question, three relevant sources, an academic database source, and a specific limit or credibility check for each.