# Claims Under Canopy

Evaluate evidence before a city plants trees.

**11.T.RA.2.b** "Analyze information from a variety of sources by identifying misconceptions, conflicting information or perspectives, and/or author bias and verifying the validity, relevancy, and accuracy of the information being considered. (I)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

## 1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline every claim that needs to be checked, then circle the source detail or missing detail that affects how trustworthy the claim is. This helps you judge whether the information is accurate, relevant, and valid.

### Should Riverton Plant More Street Trees?

(1) Riverton's council is considering a plan to plant 1,000 street trees near apartment buildings and bus stops. A city planning memo says tree shade can lower surface temperatures and make walking more comfortable during hot weather. The memo cites temperature measurements from three Riverton blocks taken last July, but it does not explain whether the blocks were measured at the same time of day. A neighborhood survey supports the plan, reporting that 82 percent of 146 respondents want more shade. Because the survey was posted online by a tree-advocacy group, its results may not represent all residents.

(2) A tree-planting organization's website, which asks visitors to donate to planting campaigns, states, without naming a study, that one mature tree removes 48 pounds of carbon dioxide each year. The website gives no tree species, no location, and no explanation of how it reached that number. In contrast, peer-reviewed research on urban forests reports that carbon storage and removal vary with species, tree size, climate, and maintenance. This research does not calculate a number for Riverton, so its broader finding is relevant but cannot confirm the website's exact figure for Riverton or every species.

(3) Some residents oppose the plan because fallen leaves could clog storm drains, while others say existing tree pits are too small for healthy roots. Both concerns deserve investigation, but neither statement includes local maintenance records or measurements of available soil. The city's public works department has records of drain cleaning and sidewalk repairs, which could test the first concern. An arborist or landscape engineer could inspect sample sites to assess soil volume and root space. Before choosing a planting design, the council should compare these local records with independent research on street-tree maintenance and site conditions.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which source has a likely sampling bias, and what detail from the passage shows that bias?

2. What detail suggests potential author bias in the tree-planting organization's website, and what missing information makes its 48-pound claim difficult to verify?

3. What evidence described in the passage could test each resident concern about street trees?

4. Why is the city planning memo relevant to Riverton, but still limited as evidence?

## 3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a claim about your school or community that people might use to support a decision. In exactly four sentences, name the claim, identify a possible bias, conflict, or misconception in one source, explain what evidence would verify it, and state a cautious conclusion.

ANSWER KEY

# Claims Under Canopy

GRADE 11 · 11.T.RA.2.b

## PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline every claim that needs to be checked, then circle the source detail or missing detail that affects how trustworthy the claim is. This helps you judge whether the information is accurate, relevant, and valid. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

## PART 2 · ANSWERS

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Which source has a likely sampling bias, and what detail from the passage shows that bias? | **The neighborhood survey has likely sampling bias because a tree-advocacy group posted it online, so respondents may not represent all residents.** |
| 2 | What detail suggests potential author bias in the tree-planting organization's website, and what missing information makes its 48-pound claim difficult to verify? | **The organization asks for planting donations, which may influence its message. It names no study and gives no species, location, or calculation method.** |
| 3 | What evidence described in the passage could test each resident concern about street trees? | **Public works drain-cleaning records could test the concern about leaves clogging drains. An arborist or landscape engineer could inspect sites to assess soil volume and root space.** |
| 4 | Why is the city planning memo relevant to Riverton, but still limited as evidence? | **It uses measurements from Riverton blocks, but it does not say whether the blocks were measured at the same time of day.** |

## PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

An online post claims that adding vending machines would raise money for our school without harming students' diets. The post was written by a vending company, so its profit motive may bias its claim. I would compare the company's sales projections with district nutrition records and an independent study of school vending programs. Until those sources support the claim, the school should not assume the machines have no effect on students' diets.

Accept equivalent explanations that identify source purpose, missing context, limits of evidence, or a suitable method of verification. For the open response, accept varied claims and sources if all four required elements are present in exactly four sentences.