Source Trail Check

Follow a claim back to its earliest accountable source.

12.T.C.2.b "Locate the original source of questionable content to better evaluate credibility and validity. (I)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each statement that makes a claim, circle each source or record, and number the sources in the order they appear in the trail. This helps you judge what the original source actually says.

A Claim About East Branch

1. On Tuesday, a screenshot moved through student group chats: "Riverbend Public Library will close the East Branch on May 1." The image named no author, date, or link. A student searched the sentence in quotation marks and found it on a neighborhood account. That post credited the Riverbend Gazette, whose article linked to a library news release. The release, dated March 8, was the earliest document in the trail. It was published on the library's official website and identified the communications office as its source.

2. Reading the release changes the claim. It says the library board will consider a proposal to combine East Branch services with the Central Branch during a May budget meeting. It does not announce a closure date or a final decision. A follow-up email from the library communications director repeats that the plan is under consideration. Because the director speaks for the same institution that issued the release, the email is confirmation from the library, not independent verification. The release is close to the claim's origin, but its wording limits what readers can conclude.

3. To check whether the proposal had entered the public decision process, the student opened the city council's online records. A posted agenda for the April 16 meeting listed a budget item proposing funds for an East Branch consolidation study. The minutes show that the council referred the item to its finance committee, rather than approving a closure. These council records are independent of the library's communications office and support only the limited facts they document. A careful evaluation would describe a proposed change, name the original release, and avoid claiming that the branch will definitely close.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What is the earliest document in the source trail, and where was it published?

2. How does the wording in the original release differ from the wording in the screenshot?

3. Which source provides independent verification of part of the situation, and what limited fact does it verify?

4. Why should the communications director's email not be treated as independent verification?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a questionable online claim that is not discussed in this passage. In exactly three sentences, identify the claim, cite its earliest or original source with a title, organization, and date, and explain whether the original source supports the claim or shows that its wording was changed.

ANSWER KEY

Source Trail Check

GRADE 12 · 12.T.C.2.b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each statement that makes a claim, circle each source or record, and number the sources in the order they appear in the trail. This helps you judge what the original source actually says. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is the earliest document in the source trail, and where was it published?	**The March 8 library news release, published on Riverbend Public Library's official website.**
2	How does the wording in the original release differ from the wording in the screenshot?	**The screenshot says the East Branch will close on May 1. The release says the board will consider a proposal during a May budget meeting and gives no closure date or final decision.**
3	Which source provides independent verification of part of the situation, and what limited fact does it verify?	**The city council agenda and minutes are independent of the library communications office. They verify that a consolidation-study budget item was listed and referred to the finance committee, not that a closure was approved.**
4	Why should the communications director's email not be treated as independent verification?	**The director represents the same library institution that issued the original news release, so the email repeats the library's position rather than providing an independent check.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A post claims that the First Amendment protects people from every consequence of what they say. The primary source is the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, ratified December 15, 1791, and available from the National Archives. Its text limits the amendment to laws made by Congress, so the post changes the source by treating it as protection from every consequence.

Accept accurate paraphrases that distinguish a proposed action from an approved closure. For Part 3, accept a credible original or primary source citation and an explanation that compares the source's actual wording with the claim.