Evidence Into Action

Trace how credible sources build a focused policy claim.

12.T.RA.1.b "Synthesize information from a variety of credible sources to support a central thesis, citing appropriately. (I)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the central thesis, circle each parenthetical citation, and write E, Z, or C in the margin beside evidence from the EPA, Ziter and colleagues, or the CDC.

Trees, Heat, and City Decisions

1 Cities often respond to dangerous summer heat by opening cooling centers, but tree canopy can reduce heat before residents need refuge. This argument does not rest on a single attractive statistic. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency explains that shade from trees can lower surface and air temperatures. A 2019 peer-reviewed study of Madison, Wisconsin, by Ziter and colleagues found that daytime air temperatures fell as tree canopy increased, especially above 40 percent cover. Together, these sources support a focused thesis: cities should protect mature trees and target new planting in neighborhoods with the least canopy (EPA, 2023; Ziter et al., 2019).

2 However, temperature evidence alone cannot decide where planting should occur. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Social Vulnerability Index uses census data to identify communities that may need support before, during, or after disasters. Its measures include poverty, age, and access to transportation. A city can compare that index with its own canopy inventory rather than assuming every treeless block has the same needs. The EPA source explains a cooling mechanism, the Ziter study supplies evidence from one city, and the CDC index adds an equity lens. Synthesizing them changes the recommendation from planting more trees to prioritizing underserved, low-canopy areas (CDC, 2022).

3 Strong research writing also reports limits. The cited sources do not prove that every planting project will cool a particular block, because results can depend on local pavement, building shade, tree species, and maintenance. An author should cite the EPA when stating general cooling benefits and cite Ziter and colleagues when reporting the Madison study's result. The final recommendation is the writer's synthesis, not a quoted conclusion, but its evidence must remain traceable. Before adopting a plan, city officials should consult local arborists and residents about species, watering, maintenance, and whether new trees will survive drought.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. State the passage's central thesis. Name the two sources used to support it in the first paragraph.

2. How does the CDC source change the recommendation from a general tree-planting idea into a more specific policy?

3. Why would it be inaccurate to use only the EPA citation after a sentence reporting the Madison study's results?

4. Identify one limit the writer gives for predicting the results of a tree-planting project. Explain why including that limit strengthens the synthesis.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a school or community policy issue. In 90 to 120 words, state a clear thesis and synthesize information from two credible sources using parenthetical citations. Explain how the sources work together to support your claim.

ANSWER KEY

Evidence Into Action

GRADE 12 · 12.T.RA.1.b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the central thesis, circle each parenthetical citation, and write E, Z, or C in the margin beside evidence from the EPA, Ziter and colleagues, or the CDC. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	State the passage's central thesis. Name the two sources used to support it in the first paragraph.	**Cities should protect mature trees and target new planting in neighborhoods with the least canopy. The first paragraph uses the EPA and Ziter et al. (2019).**
2	How does the CDC source change the recommendation from a general tree-planting idea into a more specific policy?	**The CDC's Social Vulnerability Index adds information about communities that may need more support. It leads to prioritizing underserved, low-canopy areas rather than simply planting more trees everywhere.**
3	Why would it be inaccurate to use only the EPA citation after a sentence reporting the Madison study's results?	**The EPA supports the general claim that trees cool surfaces and air. Ziter and colleagues are the source for the specific findings from the Madison study.**
4	Identify one limit the writer gives for predicting the results of a tree-planting project. Explain why including that limit strengthens the synthesis.	**Possible limits include pavement, building shade, tree species, or maintenance. Including a limit prevents the writer from overstating what the sources prove and shows that the recommendation needs local evidence.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

High schools should begin no earlier than 8:30 a.m. because adolescents need sleep for health and learning. The CDC reports that most middle and high schools start before 8:30, even though it recommends later starts for adolescents (CDC, 2023). The American Academy of Pediatrics likewise links later start times to students' biological sleep patterns and argues that schools should support sufficient sleep (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2014). Read together, the sources show that an 8:30 start is both a public-health recommendation and a practical school policy. This change could reduce the conflict between early bus schedules and students' well-documented need for adequate rest.

Accept equivalent wording when students accurately distinguish a source's direct evidence from the writer's synthesis. For Part 3, look for a focused thesis, two credible sources, accurate parenthetical citations, and an explanation of how the sources combine.