Before You Believe

Trace bias, conflicts, and evidence before using a source.

12.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 claims that need verification. Circle details that reveal a source's bias, credibility, limitation, or conflict with another source.

Trees, Heat, and Evidence

1. After a hot July, the Riverton Council considered planting 500 street trees. A landscaping company brochure said mature trees can lower nearby summer air temperatures by "up to 10°F" and promised the project would quickly reduce residents' cooling bills. The brochure linked no study and did not explain where, when, or how temperatures were measured. Because the company could win the planting contract, its financial interest may shape the brochure's optimistic language.

2. A university forestry report gives a narrower picture. It states that shade from healthy, well-placed trees can cool surfaces and reduce building energy use, but results depend on species, canopy size, building design, and local climate. The report cites measurements from several cities and identifies its methods. However, its data came mostly from neighborhoods with established tree cover, so it cannot by itself prove that newly planted saplings will create the same effects within a few years.

3. At a public meeting, residents also shared a newspaper graphic claiming that trees remove enough pollution to make busy roads "safe to breathe." The graphic named no health agency or research study. This claim conflicts with guidance from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which says people can reduce exposure near traffic by avoiding heavy traffic when possible, while broader pollution control requires cutting emissions. Trees may provide benefits, but they do not make traffic pollution harmless. Council members need stronger evidence before repeating the graphic's conclusion.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which source has the clearest possible bias, and why?

2. What makes the university report more verifiable than the brochure?

3. What claim conflicts with EPA guidance?

4. Why is the university report limited as evidence about newly planted trees?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a claim about a local issue from an ad, post, or news item. In three sentences, identify the source and a possible bias or limitation, name one source you would use to verify it, and explain whether you would use the claim as evidence.

ANSWER KEY

Before You Believe

GRADE 12 · 12.T.RA.2.b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline claims that need verification. Circle details that reveal a source's bias, credibility, limitation, or conflict with another source. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which source has the clearest possible bias, and why?	**The landscaping company brochure, because the company could win the planting contract.**
2	What makes the university report more verifiable than the brochure?	**It cites measurements from several cities and identifies its methods, while the brochure links no study or measurement details.**
3	What claim conflicts with EPA guidance?	**The newspaper graphic's claim that trees make busy roads safe to breathe conflicts with the EPA guidance that trees do not make traffic pollution harmless.**
4	Why is the university report limited as evidence about newly planted trees?	**Its data came mostly from neighborhoods with established tree cover, so it cannot prove that saplings will have the same effects within a few years.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A transit company advertisement claims its new buses will cut city pollution in half, but the company benefits if the city buys them. I would compare the claim with emissions data from the city environmental agency or an independent transportation study. Until the advertisement provides methods and comparable data, I would not use its claim as evidence.

Accept equivalent explanations that connect credibility to evidence, methods, expertise, financial interest, or missing information. For Part 3, accept any relevant claim if the response identifies a limitation, names a credible verification source, and makes a supported judgment.