

Monarch Source Trail

Practice choosing, tracking, and combining research sources.

6.T.RA.1.b "Conduct research by locating, gathering, curating, and integrating information from credible sources (including print, digital, and personal communication) about texts and related topics. (I)"

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline facts Elena gathers from sources, circle details that help show a source is credible, and number 1 and 2 beside the two source names that support the same research point.

Following a Research Path

- ① For a report about how monarch butterflies travel, Elena began with a print book from her school library. The book, *Monarchs on the Move*, listed its author, publisher, and publication date. Elena checked that the author was a biologist and noted the book was published in 2022. She gathered facts about the butterflies' fall trip to central Mexico and their need for milkweed. In her notebook, she copied the facts in her own words and wrote the page number. This record would help her find the information again.
- ② Next, Elena used a digital page from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The page named the agency and gave a date when it was updated. It explained that monarchs need nectar during migration and need milkweed because it is the only plant their caterpillars eat. Elena also interviewed Mr. Chen, a volunteer at a local nature center who leads monarch counts each September. She wrote the date of the interview and separated his observations from facts she could verify in published sources.
- ③ Elena then compared the sources before drafting her report. The book and agency page both supported the idea that monarchs depend on milkweed, so she included that point and cited both sources. Mr. Chen's count notes described fewer monarchs at his site after a week of heavy rain. Elena used this as a local observation, not proof that rain changes the whole migration. By combining the sources carefully, she could explain a broad need of monarchs and a specific event seen in her community.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 Which two details did Elena check to help decide whether the print book was credible?

2 What did Elena record to keep track of information from her sources, and how did she handle Mr. Chen's statements?

3 What research point was supported by two sources, and which two sources supported it?

4 Why did Elena avoid using Mr. Chen's count notes as proof that rain changes the whole migration?

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Choose a research question about a local animal, plant, or environmental issue. Make a three-source plan with one print source, one digital source, and one personal communication source, explain why each is credible or useful, then write two sentences explaining how you would record and combine the information without treating one local observation as a broad fact.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline facts Elena gathers from sources, circle details that help show a source is credible, and number 1 and 2 beside the two source names that support the same research point. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which two details did Elena check to help decide whether the print book was credible?	She checked that the author was a biologist and that the book was published in 2022.
2	What did Elena record to keep track of information from her sources, and how did she handle Mr. Chen's statements?	She wrote facts in her own words with page numbers, recorded the interview date, and kept Mr. Chen's observations separate from published facts she could verify.
3	What research point was supported by two sources, and which two sources supported it?	The point that monarchs depend on milkweed was supported by the print book and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service page.
4	Why did Elena avoid using Mr. Chen's count notes as proof that rain changes the whole migration?	His notes described one local site after one rainy week, so they were a local observation rather than proof about the entire migration.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Question: How do city trees help cool a neighborhood? Print: a recent library book by an urban forestry scientist, useful for background facts. Digital: a dated U.S. Forest Service webpage, credible because a government science agency publishes it. Personal communication: an interview with the city arborist, useful for observations from local streets. I would record each author or agency, date, and page number or link. I would use the book and webpage for a shared claim and label the arborist's report about one block as a local observation.

Accept different reasonable topics and sources if the student explains why each source is credible or useful. Look for all three source types, source-tracking details, and a clear distinction between combined evidence and a local observation.