

Evidence Without Guessing

A model site report uses careful, objective wording.

L6-8WHST2.e “Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone.”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline sentences that report observed evidence, and circle words that show uncertainty or limits, so you can see how a formal report avoids unsupported claims.

Report from Riverbend

- ① Archaeologists studying the Riverbend site examined soil layers beneath a modern parking lot. The layers contained pottery fragments, animal bones, charcoal, and several dark circles in the soil. Researchers recorded the location of each item before removing it. These observations do not identify the people who lived there, but they provide evidence that the area was used in the past. Careful records allow other researchers to review the evidence and compare it with findings from nearby sites.
- ② The dark circles may be stains left when wooden posts decayed, although additional testing would be needed to confirm that explanation. Charcoal can be dated by measuring changes in carbon atoms, but a date from one sample would not describe every activity at the site. Pottery styles may also help researchers estimate when an object was made. Each method has limits, so archaeologists combine several kinds of evidence before reaching a conclusion about the Riverbend site.
- ③ A site report should state what the evidence shows and separate observations from interpretations. For example, a report can describe charcoal near broken cooking vessels without claiming that a particular family cooked a meal there. The first statement can be checked against the collected materials. The second statement would require information the site may not provide. Precise words such as “may,” “suggests,” and “based on” help writers present reasonable interpretations while recognizing uncertainty. This approach keeps the report formal and useful to readers.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

- 1** Copy one sentence from paragraph 1 that reports an observation rather than a guess about the people at Riverbend.

- 2** Why does the report use the word “may” when explaining the dark circles?

- 3** What claim about the charcoal and cooking vessels does the passage say would go beyond the available evidence?

- 4** List the three words or phrases in paragraph 3 that help writers show uncertainty.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Use these field notes to write exactly three formal, objective sentences for a site report: charcoal, broken cooking vessels, and dark circles in the soil. Include one observation, one cautious interpretation, and one sentence that explains a limit of the evidence.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline sentences that report observed evidence, and circle words that show uncertainty or limits, so you can see how a formal report avoids unsupported claims. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Copy one sentence from paragraph 1 that reports an observation rather than a guess about the people at Riverbend.	Accept: "The layers contained pottery fragments, animal bones, charcoal, and several dark circles in the soil." or "Researchers recorded the location of each item before removing it."
2	Why does the report use the word "may" when explaining the dark circles?	It shows that the circles could be stains from decayed posts, but more testing is needed to confirm the explanation.
3	What claim about the charcoal and cooking vessels does the passage say would go beyond the available evidence?	The claim that a particular family cooked a meal there.
4	List the three words or phrases in paragraph 3 that help writers show uncertainty.	"may," "suggests," and "based on."

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Researchers found charcoal, broken cooking vessels, and dark circles in the soil. The dark circles may be stains left by decayed wooden posts. The materials suggest that food preparation may have occurred at the site, but they do not identify the people involved.

Accept responses that use all three field notes, separate observations from interpretations, and use cautious, formal language. Do not accept unsupported certainty, such as naming a family or stating that food preparation definitely occurred.