Follow the Evidence

Refine a question, evaluate sources, and plan a synthesis

11-12.W.5 "Conduct more sustained research assignments and tasks to build knowledge about the research process and the topic understudy. Formulate an inquiry question and refine and narrow the focus as research evolves..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each version of Leila's research question and number them in order. Circle one strength and one limitation of a source so you can see how her research plan changes.

Which Stops Need Shade?

1. At the bus stop outside her school, Leila noticed that riders crowded into the thin strip of shade beside a storefront. Her first research question, "How can cities make summer safer?" was too broad to guide a sustained investigation. She narrowed it to "How might shade at bus stops reduce riders' exposure to summer heat in my city?" After learning that stop designs vary, she revised it again: "Which of the busiest unsheltered stops near public high schools should the transit agency study first for shade?" That question identifies a decision, a place, and the people affected; it does not assume shade alone will solve heat risks.

2. To locate evidence, Leila searched the transit agency's website for stop-level ridership and a shelter inventory, using site: and filetype:pdf to filter results. She also looked for local temperature records from the National Weather Service and peer-reviewed studies of shade and outdoor thermal comfort. In her annotations, she recorded each source's author, date, method, and use for her question. Agency data could help locate heavily used stops but might not show when riders actually wait. Weather records could establish regional conditions, not the temperature at a particular stop. A single rider interview could describe experience, not represent every rider.

3. Leila made a comparison chart before drafting. She planned to pair stop-level ridership with field observations of existing shade, then use published research to explain why shade might matter. If the agency lacked stop-level counts, she would report that gap instead of inventing a ranking. Her paragraph would distinguish a research finding about shade from her own proposal to prioritize certain stops. She would paraphrase selectively, attach an MLA in-text citation to each borrowed finding, and list full source details in Works Cited. Because no single source could settle the question, she would present her recommendation as provisional.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does Leila's final question narrow her first question, and why does that make the research more manageable?

2. Which two search filters does Leila use, and what agency records is she trying to find?

3. How could agency ridership data and a rider interview each help Leila? Give one limitation of each.

4. How would Leila combine and credit evidence without claiming more than her sources support?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A school board is considering more after-school study space. In 75 to 110 words, write a research plan with a narrowed inquiry question, two different types of sources and one limitation of each, and a way to combine and credit evidence without claiming a result you have not found.

ANSWER KEY

Follow the Evidence

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each version of Leila's research question and number them in order. Circle one strength and one limitation of a source so you can see how her research plan changes. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does Leila's final question narrow her first question, and why does that make the research more manageable?	**It moves from summer safety in cities to deciding which busy, unsheltered stops near public high schools merit a shade study. The specific place, group, and decision guide what evidence to gather.**
2	Which two search filters does Leila use, and what agency records is she trying to find?	**She uses site: and filetype:pdf while searching for stop-level ridership data and a shelter inventory.**
3	How could agency ridership data and a rider interview each help Leila? Give one limitation of each.	**Ridership data could identify heavily used stops, but might not show when riders wait. An interview could describe a rider's experience, but one rider cannot represent everyone.**
4	How would Leila combine and credit evidence without claiming more than her sources support?	**She would compare ridership with observations of shade, use research to explain why shade might matter, and report missing counts rather than invent a ranking. She would paraphrase borrowed findings with MLA citations and give full details in Works Cited.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Which high schools in our district have the greatest unmet demand for after-school study space? I would request school library attendance records to compare use across campuses, but those records cannot reveal students who need space and never enter the library. I would also conduct anonymous student surveys to learn about barriers, though voluntary responses might overrepresent students with strong opinions. I would compare patterns across both sources before proposing locations, explain any missing data, and cite borrowed records and findings in MLA format rather than claim that one school needs a room most.

Accept different source choices in Part 3 if the student states a relevant use and a plausible limitation for each. The plan should distinguish a proposed method from a finding and explain how borrowed information will be credited.