Follow the Evidence

Narrow a research question and judge what sources can support.

9-10.W.5 "Conduct more sustained research assignments and tasks to build knowledge about the research process and the topic under study. 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 the broad question and the narrowed question. Circle the advanced search query, then number each source and its note about what that source can or cannot show.

A Hot Walk to the Bus Stop

(1) At 3:15 p.m., students leave the school gate and wait beside a wide stretch of bare pavement. I began with the question, "How can our city beat the heat?" That question reached far beyond what one school project could investigate. After considering where students actually walk, I narrowed it to "How might adding shade along the route from school to the bus stop reduce exposure to heat?" I kept "might" because I had not measured this route or tested any change. The tighter question let me search for evidence about shade and health rather than collect every article about summer temperatures.

(2) I searched "site:epa.gov trees shade heat islands" to find federal information about cooling. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's page "Using Trees and Vegetation to Reduce Heat Islands" explains that trees cool through shade and evapotranspiration (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency). My annotation reads, "Useful for explaining how trees change nearby conditions; does not measure heat on our bus route." I also checked the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's heat safety guidance. It helps explain why limiting heat exposure matters, but it cannot show that planting trees at this particular stop would reduce students' risk.

(3) In a draft for the school council, I would place the sources in conversation instead of writing one paragraph per website: the EPA explains why trees can create cooler spaces, while CDC guidance on heat illness explains why reducing exposure could matter (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). Together, they support studying shade along the route, not a claim that any tree would prevent illness. I would still need observations of shade at dismissal and information about where planting is possible. My final report would include a Works Cited list for both sources and present a short written recommendation alongside a checklist.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the narrowed question make this project more researchable than the first question?

2. What does “site:epa.gov” do in the search query, and why is that useful for this inquiry?

3. What can each of the two sources help explain, and what can neither source establish about this bus stop?

4. How would the writer combine the sources without making a claim the evidence cannot support?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a school issue other than heat. In 5 to 6 sentences, write a broad question and a narrower inquiry question, give one advanced search query, name two authoritative sources you would seek and what each could and could not answer, and explain how you would combine their evidence without claiming results you have not checked.

Follow the Evidence

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the broad question and the narrowed question. Circle the advanced search query, then number each source and its note about what that source can or cannot show. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the narrowed question make this project more researchable than the first question?	**It focuses on shade along one school-to-bus-stop route and on heat exposure, rather than all ways to reduce heat across a city.**
2	What does "site:epa.gov" do in the search query, and why is that useful for this inquiry?	**It limits results to EPA pages, helping the researcher find federal information about shade and cooling.**
3	What can each of the two sources help explain, and what can neither source establish about this bus stop?	**The EPA source explains how trees cool nearby conditions; CDC guidance explains why heat exposure matters. Neither establishes that planting trees at this bus stop would reduce students' risk.**
4	How would the writer combine the sources without making a claim the evidence cannot support?	**The writer would connect the EPA's explanation of cooling with the CDC's explanation of heat risks to support studying shade, while avoiding a claim that trees would prevent illness.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

My broad question is, "How can our school reduce waste?" My narrower question is, "Would reusable lunch trays reduce cafeteria trash at our school without increasing water use too much?" I would search "site:epa.gov waste prevention reusable foodware" for federal guidance. I would seek EPA guidance on waste prevention for ideas about reducing discarded materials, but it could not tell me our school's daily trash totals. I would also request our district's cafeteria waste and water records, which could show local amounts if available but could not establish environmental impacts elsewhere. I would compare the local records with the guidance, cite both sources, and avoid claiming a benefit until I verify the numbers.

Accept other accurate explanations that distinguish general evidence from evidence about the specific bus stop. For Part 3, the sources may be proposed rather than already obtained, but students should state a useful purpose and a clear limit for each.