Check the Claim

Evaluate sources in a debate about voting by mail.

USG.5.8 "Use information from a variety of credible sources to analyze and discuss current American political issues, evaluating the reliability, perspective, and purpose of the information."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the three source names, circle words that show each source's purpose, and number one limit of each source 1, 2, and 3. Use your marks to judge what each source can help you learn.

What Can Sources Tell Us About Mail Voting?

(1) Should states make voting by mail easier? A voter who works a night shift may value a ballot that arrives at home, while a voter worried about election security may want to know how that ballot is checked. The U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC), a federal agency, publishes the Election Administration and Voting Survey using information supplied by states. Its reports include mail ballot rejection counts and reported reasons. Those numbers help compare election procedures, but states collect and report data differently. A rejected ballot is not, by itself, evidence of fraud. The EAC's purpose is to inform election administrators and the public, not to endorse a campaign.

(2) For a closer look at one state's rules, consult the Colorado secretary of state's website. It explains that ballots are mailed to active registered voters and that election workers verify signatures on returned ballots. This official source is strong evidence about Colorado's procedures, though a reader should check when a page was updated. It cannot show whether every state follows the same rules or whether every voter finds the process easy. An official page also has an institutional perspective: it describes how its own system works. Its purpose is to explain procedures, not to measure voters' experiences nationwide.

(3) The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan advocacy organization, supports policies that make voting more accessible, including voting by mail. Its purpose is to promote voting access, so its policy goal shapes which facts it emphasizes. Its materials can raise useful questions about barriers faced by voters. Compare its claims about access with the EAC's state-reported data and Colorado's procedures rather than treating any one source as the whole story. For instance, a claim that mail voting helps night-shift workers is plausible, but ballot counts alone cannot prove how many workers benefited. A careful discussion separates documented procedures and reported counts from claims about effects.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why are EAC rejection counts useful but not enough to prove that mail voting involves fraud?

2. How does the Colorado secretary of state's purpose help you judge what its website can and cannot tell you?

3. How should the League of Women Voters' perspective affect the way you use its claims about voting access?

4. A speaker says, "Ballot counts prove that mail voting helps night-shift workers." Which part of the claim can the passage's sources support, and which part needs more evidence?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A school news editor wants to investigate whether expanding mail voting would improve access without weakening security. Recommend two sources from the passage to consult first, explain what each could verify and one limit of each, then pose one important question that remains unanswered.

ANSWER KEY

Check the Claim

HIGH SCHOOL · USG.5.8

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the three source names, circle words that show each source's purpose, and number one limit of each source 1, 2, and 3. Use your marks to judge what each source can help you learn. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why are EAC rejection counts useful but not enough to prove that mail voting involves fraud?	**The counts report rejected ballots and reasons, but a rejected ballot is not itself evidence of fraud. States also collect and report data differently.**
2	How does the Colorado secretary of state's purpose help you judge what its website can and cannot tell you?	**Its purpose is to explain Colorado's procedures, making it useful for checking those rules. It cannot establish other states' rules or measure voters' experiences nationwide.**
3	How should the League of Women Voters' perspective affect the way you use its claims about voting access?	**Its goal of promoting voting access may shape which facts it emphasizes. Use its claims to identify questions, then compare them with other evidence.**
4	A speaker says, "Ballot counts prove that mail voting helps night-shift workers." Which part of the claim can the passage's sources support, and which part needs more evidence?	**EAC data can support a claim about reported ballot counts. Those counts cannot establish how many night-shift workers benefited; that effect needs other evidence.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would start with the EAC and the Colorado secretary of state's website. EAC reports could show how many mail ballots states reported rejecting and why, but reporting differences limit comparisons. Colorado's site could verify its signature-checking procedure, but one state's rules do not describe every state. Together, these sources would give the editor a starting point on ballot handling, not proof that expansion improves access or weakens security. The editor should still ask: What evidence measures changes in access and security after a state expands mail voting?

Accept answers that match a source to a claim it can support and identify a relevant limit. For the open task, students may choose any two sources if they justify each choice and pose a question the sources do not settle.