Questions Worth Exploring

Turn observations into research questions.

4.6.W.1 "Students will generate a viable research question about a topic."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one detail about each of the four possible research topics, then circle Lena's final research question. Use the details to help you write your own questions.

From Wondering to Researching

1. Lena wanted to study animals, but that topic was too large for one report. She noticed a beaver dam near a walking trail and wondered how beavers choose where to build. Her first question, "Are beavers the best animals?" asked for an opinion. She changed it to "What makes a place suitable for a beaver dam?" A book about beavers and their habitats could help her investigate.

2. At a desert nature center, a visitor might see a saguaro cactus with a thick stem and roots that spread near the ground. In a garden, honeybees visit flowers and carry nectar back to their hive. Each observation offers a starting point for research. A useful question focuses on one part of the topic and asks for information that a book or trusted website could provide.

3. Along some coasts, sea turtles hatch from eggs buried in sand. The young turtles must travel from the nest to the water. Far to the north, snowy owls hunt small mammals in wide, open areas. These animals live in very different places, but each gives a curious researcher a way to begin. Instead of asking everything about an animal, a researcher can focus on one action or challenge.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. The passage says saguaro roots spread near the ground. Write a research question about how those roots help the plant.

2. The passage says honeybees visit flowers. Write a research question about how they find flowers.

3. The passage says young sea turtles travel from their nest to the water. Write a research question about that journey.

4. The passage says snowy owls hunt small mammals in open areas. Write a research question about their hunt.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a topic that is not in the passage. Write your topic, one focused research question about it, and one sentence telling where you could look for information.

ANSWER KEY

Questions Worth Exploring

GRADE 4 · 4.6.W.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one detail about each of the four possible research topics, then circle Lena's final research question. Use the details to help you write your own questions. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	The passage says saguaro roots spread near the ground. Write a research question about how those roots help the plant.	**How do roots that spread near the ground help a saguaro cactus get water?**
2	The passage says honeybees visit flowers. Write a research question about how they find flowers.	**How do honeybees find flowers with nectar?**
3	The passage says young sea turtles travel from their nest to the water. Write a research question about that journey.	**How do young sea turtles find their way from the nest to the water?**
4	The passage says snowy owls hunt small mammals in open areas. Write a research question about their hunt.	**How do snowy owls find small mammals in wide, open areas?**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

My topic is monarch butterflies. How do monarch butterflies find milkweed plants for laying eggs? I could look in a library book about butterfly life cycles.

Accept varied questions that use the stated passage detail and could be investigated with a book or trusted source. For Part 3, the topic must be new, and the question should be focused rather than ask for an opinion.