Questions Worth Asking

Use available records to shape a research question.

5.6.W.1 "Students will formulate a viable research question."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the records people can use as evidence. Circle dates, places, and categories that could help make a research question specific.

From Big Ideas to Research Questions

1. Maya wants to learn about the school library. "Why are books important?" is too big to answer with the records she can use. She can study the library's checkout list from September and October instead. Her new question is, "How did the number of graphic novels checked out change from September to October?" It names what to compare and points to evidence she can use.

2. At the school garden, students counted butterflies on sunny and cloudy days in May. Their notebook lists the number seen each day and the weather. In the cafeteria, a class weighed fruit scraps and bread scraps after lunch for one week. They wrote each kind's weight in a chart. At recess, students recorded how many classmates used the jump ropes on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday.

3. Across town, a youth club is testing a seed swap. Members wrote down how many bean, pea, and sunflower seed packets people took on opening day. A question such as "What is the best plant in the world?" cannot be answered from these numbers. A useful research question names a comparison or a pattern in the records. It also stays small enough for the available evidence to help answer it.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Write a research question about butterflies that the garden notebook could help answer.

2. Write a research question that compares two kinds of cafeteria scraps using the class chart.

3. Write a research question about jump rope use that the recess records could help answer.

4. Replace “What is the best plant in the world?” with a question the seed swap records could help answer.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a topic that is not in the passage. Write one specific research question about it, then name a record or observation you could use to answer it.

ANSWER KEY

Questions Worth Asking

GRADE 5 · 5.6.W.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the records people can use as evidence. Circle dates, places, and categories that could help make a research question specific. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Write a research question about butterflies that the garden notebook could help answer.	**Did students count more butterflies on sunny days or cloudy days in May?**
2	Write a research question that compares two kinds of cafeteria scraps using the class chart.	**Did the class weigh more fruit scraps or bread scraps after lunch during the week?**
3	Write a research question about jump rope use that the recess records could help answer.	**On which day, Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday, did the most classmates use the jump ropes?**
4	Replace "What is the best plant in the world?" with a question the seed swap records could help answer.	**Which kind of seed packet did people take most often on opening day?**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

How did the number of bikes at our school bike rack change from Monday to Friday in one school week? I could count the bikes at the rack at 9 a.m. each day.

Accept other specific questions if the named records in the passage could help answer them. For Part 3, look for a focused question and a realistic source of evidence that matches it.