Question Under Construction

Use available evidence to shape a research question.

7.6.W.1 "Students will formulate and refine a viable research question."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the records Nia can use, circle the words in her questions that those records cannot support, and number the changes she makes to narrow her topic.

Nia's Library Question

1. At Cedar Creek Middle School, Nia sees a cart of graphic novels beside the library desk. Her first question is, "Why does nobody read books anymore?" She crosses out "nobody" because students are carrying books out of the library. She also realizes that "books" could mean many kinds of reading, while "anymore" would require records from earlier years. Nia decides to focus on graphic novels and borrowing patterns at her own school. She keeps her first attempt on the page so she can see how her thinking changes.

2. The librarian can share monthly checkout totals for graphic novels and prose novels from September through December of this school year. The totals cover the whole school, not separate grades, and they do not name students. Nia could compare the two kinds of books or track one kind across those four months. The librarian also remembers putting a graphic novel display by the door in October, but no one counted how many students looked at it. Nia notes that a checkout shows a book was borrowed, not that it was read.

3. Nia tries another question: "Did the October display make every student love graphic novels?" She sees two problems. A display might affect borrowing, but checkout totals alone cannot prove what caused a change. Also, a checkout record cannot reveal anyone's feelings. She replaces "love" with something the records actually measure and limits her time frame to the months on file. Before settling on a final question, she checks whether each word matches the evidence she can collect. Her question should invite an investigation, not assume the answer.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Rewrite Nia's first question as a focused research question about graphic novel borrowing that fits the dates on file.

2. A classmate asks, “Did seventh graders borrow more graphic novels than prose novels in October?” Revise the question so Nia's records could answer it.

3. Revise “Did the October display cause graphic novel borrowing to rise?” so the question does not claim more than the records can show.

4. Replace “Did every student love graphic novels?” with a question that compares what the records measure for both types of books across the available months.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a school or community topic other than books or library use. Write a broad starting question, a narrower research question, and two realistic sources of evidence, then explain in one sentence how you made your question answerable.

ANSWER KEY

Question Under Construction

GRADE 7 · 7.6.W.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the records Nia can use, circle the words in her questions that those records cannot support, and number the changes she makes to narrow her topic. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Rewrite Nia's first question as a focused research question about graphic novel borrowing that fits the dates on file.	**How did graphic novel checkouts at Cedar Creek Middle School change from September through December of this school year?**
2	A classmate asks, "Did seventh graders borrow more graphic novels than prose novels in October?" Revise the question so Nia's records could answer it.	**At Cedar Creek Middle School, were more graphic novels or prose novels checked out in October?**
3	Revise "Did the October display cause graphic novel borrowing to rise?" so the question does not claim more than the records can show.	**How did graphic novel checkout totals in October compare with those in September?**
4	Replace "Did every student love graphic novels?" with a question that compares what the records measure for both types of books across the available months.	**How did monthly graphic novel checkouts compare with prose novel checkouts from September through December at Cedar Creek Middle School?**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Broad question: Why is school lunch wasted? Refined question: Which lunch items are most often left unopened on our cafeteria's share table during one school week? Sources: I could count unopened items on the share table each day and check the posted lunch menu. I narrowed the topic to items I can count during one week.

Accept other focused questions if the stated evidence could answer them. For Part 3, look for a clear limit on the topic and sources the student could realistically use.