The Courtyard File

Trace evidence from records, observations, and a news report.

8.6.R.2 "Students will find, record, and organize information from a variety of primary and secondary sources, following ethical and legal guidelines."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the sources Mina uses, then write 1 beside sources made by someone who directly observed or recorded an event and 2 beside a source that summarizes other people's accounts. Circle the dates that help you compare the sources.

What Happened at the Drain?

1. After a September storm at fictional Cedar Ridge School, eighth grader Mina wanted to know why the courtyard still held water. She wrote the question at the top of a research page and opened a file of records. In her own notes dated September 18, 2025, she had measured a puddle three centimeters deep beside the drain at 3:15 p.m. A classmate also offered a photo taken that afternoon. Mina wrote down who created each item and when, but she did not copy the photo yet.

2. Next, Mina checked the school's maintenance log. An entry signed by custodian Mr. Lee on September 12 said the courtyard drain was blocked by leaves. A second entry, signed September 21, recorded that he cleared the drain. Mina listed those entries under "Drain condition" and her puddle measurement under "Water after the storm." The student newspaper's September 20 article summarized interviews about the flooding and said staff cleared the drain on September 18. Its writer had not inspected the drain or signed the maintenance entries.

3. Mina did not treat the article and log as matching accounts. She recorded the article's claim beside the dated log entry and marked the clearing date as a point to check with Mr. Lee. Before using the classmate's photo in a report, she asked for permission and wrote down the photographer's name. For every source she kept a title or description, a creator, and a date, so readers could trace her evidence. She planned to credit the newspaper for its summary rather than copy its whole article.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Name two sources made by someone who directly observed or recorded conditions in the courtyard. Give the creator and date of each.

2. Which source summarizes other people's accounts? What does the passage say its writer did not do?

3. Write a brief note under the heading “Clearing date” that gives the newspaper's claim and the maintenance log's entry. What should Mina check?

4. What should Mina do before using the photo, and how should she use the newspaper article ethically?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a different school or neighborhood question. In 80 to 110 words, plan where you would find two firsthand sources and one source that summarizes others, what you would record from each, two headings for your notes, and how you would give credit and seek permission.

ANSWER KEY

The Courtyard File

GRADE 8 · 8.6.R.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the sources Mina uses, then write 1 beside sources made by someone who directly observed or recorded an event and 2 beside a source that summarizes other people's accounts. Circle the dates that help you compare the sources. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Name two sources made by someone who directly observed or recorded conditions in the courtyard. Give the creator and date of each.	**Mina's notes, made by Mina on September 18, 2025, and the maintenance log entries, signed by Mr. Lee on September 12 and September 21.**
2	Which source summarizes other people's accounts? What does the passage say its writer did not do?	**The September 20 student newspaper article summarizes interviews. Its writer did not inspect the drain or sign the maintenance entries.**
3	Write a brief note under the heading "Clearing date" that gives the newspaper's claim and the maintenance log's entry. What should Mina check?	**Clearing date: The newspaper says staff cleared the drain on September 18; Mr. Lee's log records clearing it on September 21. Mina should check the difference with Mr. Lee.**
4	What should Mina do before using the photo, and how should she use the newspaper article ethically?	**She should ask permission to use the photo and name its photographer. She should credit the newspaper for its summary rather than copy the whole article.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

My question is why the path near our library gets crowded after lunch. I would observe the path for three days and record the time and number of people waiting. I would ask a hall monitor when the crowd starts and record the monitor's name, role, and interview date. I would find a school newsletter article summarizing interviews about lunchtime traffic and note its author, date, and main claim. My notes would use the headings "Crowd size" and "Possible causes." I would credit the article, ask before quoting the monitor, and not share names of students I observe.

Accept other firsthand courtyard sources named in the passage, such as the classmate's dated photo, if the creator and date are identified. For Your Turn, look for three distinct sources, useful details to record, two organizing headings, and specific steps for credit and permission.