Questions Worth Asking

Turn facts about the past into research questions.

5.P.4.2.A "Formulate a viable research question related to expanding knowledge of social studies concepts."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two facts about public libraries that could lead to research questions. Circle two types of records you could use to investigate those questions.

Who Could Use the Library?

1. In the early 1900s, many towns in the United States wanted public libraries where people could borrow books without paying. Andrew Carnegie, a wealthy businessman, paid for the construction of more than 1,600 public library buildings in the United States. A town seeking his help usually had to provide land and promise money each year to run its library.

2. Opening a library did not mean everyone had equal access. In some places, segregation kept Black residents out of public libraries or limited the services they could use. Town rules could also decide when a library was open and who could borrow books. Old library rules, town budgets, and newspaper reports can show how a library served its community.

3. Historians do not stop at asking whether libraries were good or bad. They ask focused questions that can be explored with evidence. For example, how did trains change mail delivery in one state between 1880 and 1920? This question gives a place, a time, and a change to investigate. A strong research question can lead to new learning, not just a yes-or-no answer.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Write a research question about how a town met one condition for getting a Carnegie library. Name a type of record from the passage that could help answer it.

2. Write a research question about unequal access to public libraries in the early 1900s. Name a source from the passage that could help you investigate.

3. A student asks, "Were libraries good?" Rewrite this as a focused research question about library hours or borrowing rules. Name a source from the passage that could help answer it.

4. Write a research question about how a library served its community that newspaper reports might help answer.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a social studies topic other than libraries or mail delivery. Write one focused research question about it, then write one sentence naming a source you could use and what you would look for.

ANSWER KEY

Questions Worth Asking

GRADE 5 · 5.P.4.2.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two facts about public libraries that could lead to research questions. Circle two types of records you could use to investigate those questions. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Write a research question about how a town met one condition for getting a Carnegie library. Name a type of record from the passage that could help answer it.	**How did one town raise the money it promised to run its Carnegie library? Town budgets could help answer this.**
2	Write a research question about unequal access to public libraries in the early 1900s. Name a source from the passage that could help you investigate.	**How did library rules in one town limit Black residents' use of its public library in the early 1900s? Old library rules could help answer this.**
3	A student asks, "Were libraries good?" Rewrite this as a focused research question about library hours or borrowing rules. Name a source from the passage that could help answer it.	**How did one town's public library hours change during the early 1900s? Old library rules could help answer this.**
4	Write a research question about how a library served its community that newspaper reports might help answer.	**How did newspaper reports describe the ways residents used one town's public library in the early 1900s?**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

How have people in my town used its main park differently over the last 30 years? I would read local newspaper reports from those years to find descriptions of park events and activities.

Accept other focused questions grounded in the passage when the named source could reasonably help investigate them. For Part 3, accept a different social studies topic if the question can be researched and the source fits it.