Claims Need Grounding

Build a thesis from sources that fit the question

TOT.P.4.2.A "Develop self-generated theses or claims related to independent research and investigations using credible and relevant sources."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the student's thesis, circle one finding from each federal agency that supports it, and number two local sources the student could check to improve the claim.

Where Should Shade Go?

1. A student wants to investigate a question close to home: Should the town add shade along routes students walk to school? An answer based only on a hot walk would be a personal opinion, not a research-based claim. The student searches for evidence that fits the question. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) explains that trees cool nearby areas through shade and the release of water vapor. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) advises people to seek shade to reduce heat exposure. These agencies publish information about environmental conditions and health, so their guidance is more useful here than an unsigned advertisement for tree seedlings.

2. The two sources support a narrow claim: the town should consider adding shade to heavily used school walking routes to reduce heat exposure. This is the student's thesis, not a sentence copied from either agency. It connects the EPA's explanation of cooling with the CDC's advice about avoiding heat. A stronger claim, such as "Trees will prevent every case of heat illness," would outrun the evidence. Trees take time to grow, and shaded sidewalks do not remove every heat risk. The student could also investigate covered stops or other ways to provide shade while new trees grow.

3. To decide where planting might help, the student still needs local evidence. A city tree inventory could show where street trees already stand, but it might miss newly planted or removed trees. School travel surveys could show which routes students actually use, though a small survey might not represent everyone. The student would check when each source was collected and compare it with observations made on several school days. If few students use an unshaded street, that street may not be the best first choice. A credible source must be both trustworthy and relevant to the particular claim it is asked to support.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How do the EPA and CDC findings work together to support the student's thesis?

2. A classmate claims, “Trees will prevent every case of heat illness.” Rewrite this as a narrower thesis supported by the passage.

3. Which two local sources could help the student decide where shade matters most, and what could each show?

4. Before using an old city tree inventory to support a claim about today's routes, what should the student check, and why?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a local public issue other than street shade. In three sentences, state a tentative thesis, name two credible sources you would consult and explain what each could show, then identify one finding that could change your thesis.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · TOT.P.4.2.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the student's thesis, circle one finding from each federal agency that supports it, and number two local sources the student could check to improve the claim. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do the EPA and CDC findings work together to support the student's thesis?	**The EPA explains how trees cool an area, while the CDC advises seeking shade to reduce heat exposure. Together, they support considering shade on school walking routes.**
2	A classmate claims, "Trees will prevent every case of heat illness." Rewrite this as a narrower thesis supported by the passage.	**The town should consider adding shade to heavily used school walking routes to reduce heat exposure.**
3	Which two local sources could help the student decide where shade matters most, and what could each show?	**A city tree inventory could show where street trees stand. School travel surveys could show which routes students use.**
4	Before using an old city tree inventory to support a claim about today's routes, what should the student check, and why?	**The student should check its date and compare it with current observations because trees may have been planted or removed.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our town should test a later weekday library closing time before making it permanent. I would use the public library's time-stamped entry counts to check evening demand and a school district student survey to learn who needs a quiet place to study. If the counts show little evening use and the survey shows little need, I would reconsider the trial.

Accept other defensible, limited claims grounded in the passage for question 2. For Part 3, look for a self-generated thesis, two sources relevant to that specific issue, and a finding that could prompt revision.