

Short Inquiry, Deeper Inquiry

Gather evidence, answer a question, then pursue what remains uncertain.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.7 "Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject..."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Read this fictional research example. In paragraph 1, underline the three source types. In paragraph 2, circle the sentence that changes the question. In paragraph 3, underline the added source and circle the limit on the final finding.

Who Can Use the Study Room?

- ① A student team at fictional Bell High asked whether the library's group room needed more lunchtime hours. During a short inquiry, they read its booking schedule, observed use on two days, and interviewed the librarian. The schedule showed when the room was available; observations recorded empty seats and waiting groups; the interview explained reservation rules. The team compared these sources in a brief report instead of merely listing them.
- ② Their evidence suggested that clearer booking information might matter as much as extra hours. But lunchtime observations could not show what happened after school. They broadened the question: How do booking rules and transport schedules affect access across the day? They recorded why the original question was too narrow, then scheduled a longer investigation.
- ③ Over the following week, the team gathered after-school observations and read the late-bus timetable as an additional source. They compared new findings with the first report and wrote a revised explanation. Their recommendation was conditional because the observations covered only a few days. They identified another question about students who did not use the room. More time had changed both the evidence and the scope of the inquiry.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 Name the three initial source types. How did the report go beyond a list?

2 How and why did the team broaden its question?

3 What evidence was added, and why was the final recommendation conditional?

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Investigate a school or community issue of your choice. Complete a short inquiry in 1-2 sessions, then a sustained follow-up across at least three later dates. Submit the source log, both finished reports and an explained change in question. Use actual evidence; a plan alone does not complete either project.

1. Short inquiry: gather and compare

Date your work and write your own focused question. Consult at least three actual sources: documents, interviews or recorded observations. For each, log creator, title/topic, date, location/URL, a relevant finding and a limit. Compare two findings: do they agree, differ or address different conditions? Attach full notes. Your teacher can arrange source access.

2. Short inquiry: finished report

Write 120-160 words answering your question for a named audience. Use and attribute all three sources, connect their findings rather than list summaries, and state a supported conclusion plus a limit. Keep this completed report. Labels and source-log entries are outside the word count.

[illegible]

3. Sustained inquiry: change and investigate

Across at least three later dates, narrow or broaden your question for a reason found in the first evidence. Record the old/new questions and why the change matters. Consult at least one additional relevant source and gather further evidence from an earlier source or method. Date each session; log source details, findings, limits and how the new evidence changes your answer. Attach full notes.

[illegible]

4. Sustained inquiry: finished synthesis

On your final date, write 200-250 words in several paragraphs for the same audience. State the revised question and qualified answer; integrate all four or more sources and compare the new evidence with the first report. Explain a limit and what remains unknown. Check citations against the actual sources. Submit both full reports and the dated log, including the explained question change.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Read this fictional research example. In paragraph 1, underline the three source types. In paragraph 2, circle the sentence that changes the question. In paragraph 3, underline the added source and circle the limit on the final finding. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Name the three initial source types. How did the report go beyond a list?	A booking schedule, observations and a librarian interview. The report compared what the sources showed to answer the question.
2	How and why did the team broaden its question?	It added booking rules, transport and access across the day because lunchtime evidence could not explain after-school access.
3	What evidence was added, and why was the final recommendation conditional?	After-school observations and a late-bus timetable were added. Only a few days were observed, so wider conclusions remained uncertain.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Teacher case: All school records, people and observations here are invented models set in May 2026. Students investigate their own question with actual sources and keep full records.

Short report: Bell High's library committee should test clearer lunchtime booking information before adding hours. This invented case concerns access to a group study room. The May booking schedule lists thirty lunchtime minutes each day. Yet Chen's observations on May 4 and 5 found empty seats while some groups waited outside. Available time therefore did not guarantee that students understood how to use it.

In a May 6 interview, librarian Patel explained that groups must reserve the room before lunch. Together, the schedule, observations and interview suggest a possible information barrier. They do not prove why each group waited or whether every day was similar. A clearer reservation notice could be tested, with observations before and afterward. The committee should also investigate after-school access before treating the lunchtime findings as a complete answer.

Short-inquiry log (May 6): Question: Does the group room need more lunchtime hours? A: library office, May room schedule, class folder; thirty lunchtime minutes daily. B: Chen, May 4/5 observation sheets, class folder; empty seats and waiting groups. C: Patel, May 6 interview notes, class folder; reserve before lunch. Limits: schedule versus actual use; two observed days; one staff viewpoint.

Sustained log (May 11, 12, 13): Broaden to rules, transport and access across the day because lunch evidence excludes after-school use. May 11/13: further Chen observations, class folder; room open, fewer Wednesday visitors than Monday. May 12: D, transport office, May late-bus timetable, class folder; Tuesday/Thursday only. Neither observation is a bus day. Dates alone do not explain attendance; a matched comparison is missing.

Sustained report: How do booking rules and transport schedules affect access to Bell High's group study room across the day? In this invented investigation, the evidence supports testing clearer booking information while examining whether after-school hours fit students' journeys. Extra time alone may not resolve every barrier.

The May room schedule and librarian Patel's May 6 interview establish the available lunchtime period and advance-reservation rule. Chen's May 4 and 5 observations found empty seats alongside waiting groups. Taken together, these sources suggest an information problem worth testing. They do not show that the rule caused every group to wait.

The sustained inquiry added transport evidence and observations. The school transport office's May timetable lists a late bus on Tuesdays and Thursdays only. Chen's observations on May 11 and 13 found the room open after school, with fewer visitors on Wednesday than Monday. Neither observed day had a late bus, so this comparison cannot establish the bus's effect. It instead reveals a missing comparison with a bus day.

The committee should try a clearer booking notice and gather matched observations on days with and without a late bus. Conversations with nonusers could reveal other barriers. The first report focused on lunchtime information; the broader question exposes a transport issue that remains unresolved. This small observation record supports further testing, not a claim that one change will help everyone.

TEACHER ASSESSMENT NOTES

Require completed short and sustained research, not a proposed plan. Check three actual initial sources, an additional fourth source and further evidence, full dated logs, an evidence-driven question change, and both reports within their ranges. Assess connections across sources, traceable attributions, qualified conclusions and understanding of the issue. Accept defensible alternative conclusions. Arrange access or research time when needed; teacher-case notes cannot replace student research.