

Evidence Together

Compare credible sources to build a balanced research claim.

4.T.RA.1.c "Consider and integrate information from research, including relevant and accurate evidence from two or more credible sources. (C)"

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one finding from the National Park Service and one possible effect named by the U.S. Geological Survey. Circle the sentence beginning "Together" and star the words "fish movement" in it.

What Beaver Dams Do

Beaver dams slow water and form ponds. A National Park Service article describes research at Rocky Mountain National Park after wildfires. When water slows, sediment, or tiny bits of soil, can settle in the ponds. The study found that beaver ponds trapped and held sediment after fires. This can help protect downstream water quality. The finding comes from a particular study, not from a test of every beaver dam.

The U.S. Geological Survey describes a research project on beavers in Arctic Alaska. It examines how beaver dams change water and habitats. The project identifies possible effects on fish: dams may restrict their movement or change places where they feed and spawn, or lay eggs. Researchers are investigating these effects. This possible challenge should not be reported as proof that every dam harms every fish.

Together, these sources suggest that beaver dams can hold sediment while also raising questions about fish movement. The sources concern different places and questions, so a careful report keeps their limits. Both organizations publish scientific work, but readers should also check each article's topic, methods and evidence. A balanced claim explains what the evidence supports and what it does not show.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Name the two sources and give one finding or possible effect from each.

2 How does the Geological Survey source add to the Park Service source?

3 Does the passage support “Every beaver dam always improves a stream”? Explain.

4 Besides an organization’s name, what should a researcher check to judge evidence? Why?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a different animal or environmental question. With teacher help, read two credible sources. Record an accurate relevant fact from each, then write a three- or four-sentence answer that names the sources and explains what their facts show together.

1. Research and record

Write your question. For each source, record its organization, title, page or web address, one relevant fact and why you trust its evidence. Use teacher-provided printouts or approved sources.

2. Combine the evidence

Write your complete answer. Include your question, both named sources and their facts, and a conclusion supported by both. Keep any important limits; do not turn "may" into "always."

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline one finding from the National Park Service and one possible effect named by the U.S. Geological Survey. Circle the sentence beginning “Together” and star the words “fish movement” in it. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Name the two sources and give one finding or possible effect from each.	National Park Service: studied ponds trapped sediment after fires. U.S. Geological Survey: dams may restrict fish movement or change feeding and spawning habitat; these effects are being investigated.
2	How does the Geological Survey source add to the Park Service source?	It raises questions about fish movement and habitat in Arctic Alaska, while the Park Service reports sediment retention after fires in Rocky Mountain National Park.
3	Does the passage support “Every beaver dam always improves a stream”? Explain.	No. One study found a sediment benefit in a particular place. The other source identifies possible fish effects to investigate. These do not establish what every dam does.
4	Besides an organization’s name, what should a researcher check to judge evidence? Why?	Check the article’s topic, methods and evidence. These show whether its findings are relevant, supported and limited to particular settings.

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Research notes

Question: How can plastic harm sea turtles? NOAA Fisheries, "Entanglement of Marine Life: Risks and Response," explains that sea turtles can be caught in fishing gear and other debris. Smithsonian Ocean, "Marine Plastics," explains that turtles can mistake drifting plastic bags for jellyfish. NOAA works on wildlife entanglement response; Smithsonian presents marine science information. Both facts directly address the question.

Combined answer

How can plastic harm sea turtles? NOAA Fisheries says sea turtles can become entangled in fishing gear and other marine debris. Smithsonian Ocean explains that turtles may mistake plastic bags for jellyfish and eat them. Together, these facts show two ways plastic can harm turtles: entanglement and being swallowed.

TEACHER ASSESSMENT NOTES

Source paragraphs paraphrase NPS, "Beaver Ponds: How do Post-Fire Sediment and Carbon Dynamics Contribute to Watershed Resilience?" ([nps.gov/articles/beaver-ponds.htm](https://www.nps.gov/articles/beaver-ponds.htm)), and USGS, "Beavers Impacting Tundra Ecosystems" ([usgs.gov/centers/alaska-science-center/science/beavers-impacting-tundra-ecosystems-bite](https://www.usgs.gov/centers/alaska-science-center/science/beavers-impacting-tundra-ecosystems-bite)). Model references: NOAA Fisheries, "Entanglement of Marine Life: Risks and Response" ([fisheries.noaa.gov/insight/entanglement-marine-life-risks-and-response](https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/insight/entanglement-marine-life-risks-and-response)); Smithsonian Ocean, "Marine Plastics" (ocean.si.edu/conservation/pollution/marine-plastics). Provide access to two suitable print or online sources before the independent task. Check the student's facts against the identified texts and require a conclusion using both. Accept other topics and credible sources. Agency reputation alone does not prove that a particular claim is accurate or relevant.