

Source Sleuth Garden

Use author and organization clues to judge sources.

4.T.RA.2.b "Determine the credibility and relevance of a source text based on known information about the author and/or organization. (1)"

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Read these fictional source descriptions. Underline clues about each author's expertise or organization's work. Circle clues about whether the source fits the local garden question. A source can be trustworthy yet not fit a question.

Choosing Garden Sources

Maple Grove Elementary plans a pollinator garden and needs information about native flowers. The student council finds a webpage from the State Department of Natural Resources. It is written by ecologist Dr. Lina Perez, who studies native plants for the department. The page explains which flowers grow in the state's soil and climate. It lists its research reports and the date it was updated.

Next, the council sees a post called "Flowers I Like" on Max's personal blog. Max says he enjoys taking flower photos during family trips. He does not tell where he learned about plants, and the post has no links to research. His list includes flowers from several states. The post could give garden ideas, but it may not help choose flowers for Maple Grove.

A third source is a fact sheet from the county university extension office. The fact sheet is signed by Maya Chen, a horticulture educator who teaches local gardeners. It describes sunlight, water, and bloom times for native flowers. It also tells readers to check the plant label before buying. Because the office serves the county, its information is useful for the school's nearby garden.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

- 1** Name two details that make the State Department of Natural Resources webpage credible.

- 2** Which source gives the least evidence of plant expertise or research support? Explain why that affects credibility.

- 3** Which source is most directly relevant to the school's nearby garden? Use one passage detail to explain.

- 4** Max lists flowers from several states. Does that detail mainly concern credibility or relevance to Maple Grove? Explain.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a school question and examine one teacher-approved source that might help answer it. Identify the source, then make separate judgments about its credibility and relevance using details you can actually find.

1. Identify and inspect

Write your question and the source's title, author or organization, and page or web address. Record one known fact about the author's expertise or the organization's work and where you found it.

2. Judge credibility and relevance

Explain what supports or limits your trust in this source. Separately, give one source detail showing whether it fits your question. State whether you would use it or seek more information.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Read these fictional source descriptions. Underline clues about each author's expertise or organization's work. Circle clues about whether the source fits the local garden question. A source can be trustworthy yet not fit a question. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Name two details that make the State Department of Natural Resources webpage credible.	It is written by Dr. Lina Perez, an ecologist who studies native plants for the department, and it lists research reports and an update date.
2	Which source gives the least evidence of plant expertise or research support? Explain why that affects credibility.	Max's blog gives the least support: he describes enjoying flower photography but gives no plant qualifications or research links. This leaves less evidence for trusting its plant-selection advice; it does not prove the post is false.
3	Which source is most directly relevant to the school's nearby garden? Use one passage detail to explain.	The county university extension fact sheet is most directly relevant because the extension office serves the county and gives local gardening information.
4	Max lists flowers from several states. Does that detail mainly concern credibility or relevance to Maple Grove? Explain.	It mainly concerns relevance: a list covering several states may not fit Maple Grove's local soil and climate. The wide location range alone does not show that the facts are wrong or the author is unreliable.

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Question and source

Question: Where should our class take shelter when a thunderstorm approaches? Source: National Weather Service, "Overview: Lightning Safety," [weather.gov/safety/lightning-safety-overview](https://www.weather.gov/safety/lightning-safety-overview). The agency's About page says its work includes weather forecasts and warnings to protect people.

Two judgments

Credibility: giving weather warnings is part of this organization's work, so its lightning advice has relevant expertise behind it. Relevance: the page identifies substantial buildings as a safe option, which directly helps answer our shelter question. I would use it with our teacher's school safety plan.

TEACHER ASSESSMENT NOTES

The garden profiles and named people are fictional teaching examples. Credibility concerns reasons to trust information; relevance concerns fit to a particular question. Missing qualifications or research links reduce demonstrated support but do not prove a source false. Geographic breadth mainly affects local relevance. Accept other supported source judgments. Provide access to a suitable source and author/organization information before the independent task; students should acknowledge missing information instead of inventing credentials. Real model references: National Weather Service, "Overview: Lightning Safety" ([weather.gov/safety/lightning-safety-overview](https://www.weather.gov/safety/lightning-safety-overview)) and "About the NWS" ([weather.gov/about/](https://www.weather.gov/about/)). The model is one source evaluation, not a complete storm safety plan.