Narrow the Question

Trace how researchers use sources to sharpen an inquiry.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.7 "Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each of the three sources Jada used before changing her question. Number three details that show why she made her question smaller.

A Smaller, Stronger Question

1. Jada began a short research project with a big question: Can green roofs cool an entire city? A green roof is planted on top of a building, where soil and plants cover part or all of the roof. She first read a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration webpage about urban heat islands. It explained that pavement and dark roofs absorb sunlight and can make cities warmer than nearby areas. Jada underlined this background information, but she noticed it did not show how much one green roof changes city temperature.

2. Next, Jada compared two more sources. An Environmental Protection Agency page described green roofs as one strategy that can lower a building's roof-surface temperature and help manage rainwater. A city public works report described a library roof garden and gave its size, plant types, and maintenance costs. Neither source measured the temperature of the whole city. Together, the three sources suggested a clearer, smaller inquiry: How might a green roof affect heat and rainwater at one public building? Jada wrote the new question in her notes.

3. To answer it, Jada planned to collect three kinds of evidence. She would use the library's energy bills from similar summer months before and after the garden was installed. She would check the city report for rainfall captured by the roof, then read a university extension guide about limits of comparing bills when weather or building use changes. Jada would not claim that one roof cools the whole city. Instead, she would explain what her sources could show about that library and identify questions that still needed more evidence.

YOUR INQUIRY PACKET: ORIGINAL FICTIONAL SCHOOL RECORDS

Source	Record	Limit
A: Library return log, one week	Monday: 12 returns; Tuesday: 18; Wednesday: 16.	No reasons for lateness were recorded.
B: Librarian interview note	Some pupils said they forgot the return date; a reminder card is available.	No count of pupils giving that reason.
C: Reminder trial note, one class	After one reminder, 8 of 10 borrowed books came back on the due date.	One class only; no earlier comparison group.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What was Jada's original question, and what was her revised question? Why was the revised question a better fit for her sources?

2. Identify the three sources Jada used before she changed her question. What information did each source provide?

3. Which source would help Jada avoid making an unfair comparison between energy bills, and why?

4. What claim does Jada decide not to make? What narrower claim could her evidence support?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

First write a 55–75-word plan: a school question, three possible sources and what each offers, then a narrower question and reason. Then conduct an inquiry with the supplied fictional records. Begin with "How can every school prevent all late library returns?" Read A, B and C, record one source-labeled finding and one limit from each, and refocus to a question these records can help answer. Below, write 55–75 words giving your narrower question, a supported answer using all three records and why you narrowed it. Use another sheet for notes; do not claim the trial proves a cause.

ANSWER KEY

Narrow the Question

GRADE 6 · W.6.7

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each of the three sources Jada used before changing her question. Number three details that show why she made her question smaller. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What was Jada's original question, and what was her revised question? Why was the revised question a better fit for her sources?	**Her original question was whether green roofs can cool an entire city. Her revised question was how a green roof might affect heat and rainwater at one public building. Her sources did not measure the temperature of a whole city, but they could provide information about a single building.**
2	Identify the three sources Jada used before she changed her question. What information did each source provide?	**The NOAA webpage gave background about urban heat islands. The EPA page explained that green roofs can lower roof-surface temperature and help manage rainwater. The city public works report described the library roof garden, including its size, plants, and costs.**
3	Which source would help Jada avoid making an unfair comparison between energy bills, and why?	**The university extension guide would help because it explains that weather or changes in building use can affect energy-bill comparisons.**
4	What claim does Jada decide not to make? What narrower claim could her evidence support?	**She decides not to claim that one green roof cools the whole city. Her evidence could support a claim about how the library's green roof affects heat or rainwater at that library.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

My narrower question is, What reminder might help this school's borrowers return books? Log A records returns but no reasons for lateness. Interview B mentions forgotten dates and available cards, and trial C reports eight of ten books returned after one reminder. I suggest testing reminder cards further. I narrowed the question because these small records cannot explain every school or prove that reminders caused the returns.

Accept answers that accurately connect each source to the information it provides and explain that the inquiry became narrower because the available evidence could not support a citywide claim. For Part 3, accept varied topics when the response includes three relevant sources, a narrower revised question, and a reasonable explanation. For the actual inquiry, check notes containing a finding and limit from each A/B/C, a question suited to those records, and a 55–75-word supported answer explaining the refocus. No forced causal conclusion. The packet is explicitly fictional practice evidence; naming future sources alone is incomplete. Original source-analysis answers remain valid.