Follow the Evidence

Trace how a researcher checks sources and revises a question.

ELA.6.C.4.1 "Conduct research to answer a question, drawing on multiple reliable and valid sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the name or type of each source Maya considers, circle details that show why a source is useful or not useful, and put a 1 beside the sentence where Maya refocuses her inquiry.

A Better Turtle Question

1. Maya began with the question, "Do streetlights affect sea turtle hatchlings on Harbor Beach?" She first checked a social media post claiming that hatchlings always crawl toward the brightest light. The post named no author, date, or evidence, so Maya did not use it. Instead, she found a state wildlife agency webpage explaining that hatchlings usually move toward the brightest horizon, which is normally moonlight reflected on the ocean. Artificial lights can draw them inland, where they may face roads, predators, or exhaustion.

2. Next, Maya located a peer-reviewed study in a marine biology journal. The researchers compared hatchling paths on dark beaches and beaches with nearby artificial lights. Their results showed that artificial lighting changed many hatchlings' travel direction. Maya also read Harbor Beach's lighting ordinance, a local government document. It requires some beachfront properties to shield or turn off lights during nesting season. This source did not measure hatchling behavior, but it showed that local officials considered the problem important enough to regulate.

3. After comparing the sources, Maya could answer part of her question: artificial lights can affect hatchling direction. However, none of her sources counted hatchlings at Harbor Beach or identified which local lights were visible from nests. She refocused her inquiry to ask, "Which lights near Harbor Beach are visible from nesting areas, and when are they on?" To investigate, she planned to use a beach lighting survey from the wildlife agency, the city's public lighting map, and observations recorded during safe, permitted visits.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why did Maya decide not to use the social media post as a source?

2. Which source gives the strongest direct evidence that artificial light can change hatchlings' travel direction? Explain why.

3. Why is Harbor Beach's lighting ordinance useful but not enough to answer Maya's original question?

4. What was Maya's refocused question, and what missing local evidence did it address?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Source packet: fictional Elm reading club
These three classroom-authored records are invented for practice, not real-school facts.

Source A: club coordinator's schedule, October 9, 2026
The Elm reading club can meet Tuesday or Thursday from 3:10 to 3:30. A room and an adult supervisor are required.

Source B: office room-booking record, October 9, 2026
Room 4 is booked by another group Tuesday from 3:00 to 4:00. Room 4 is free Thursday from 3:00 to 4:00. This record does not list any other room.

Source C: adult supervisor's availability note, October 9, 2026
The supervisor is available Thursday from 3:05 to 3:40 and unavailable Tuesday. The note does not state the number of club members or room capacity.

Conduct a short inquiry: When can Elm reading club meet in Room 4 with its supervisor? Read all three records and take source-labeled notes on extra paper. Then write 4–6 sentences combining relevant findings into an answer, explaining why the records are useful and directly valid for this question. Identify a real missing detail in this packet and refocus the inquiry to investigate it; do not assume that missing fact is true. Keep your notes for your teacher.

ANSWER KEY

Follow the Evidence

GRADE 6 · ELA.6.C.4.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the name or type of each source Maya considers, circle details that show why a source is useful or not useful, and put a 1 beside the sentence where Maya refocuses her inquiry. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did Maya decide not to use the social media post as a source?	**The post named no author, date, or evidence, so Maya could not check its claim.**
2	Which source gives the strongest direct evidence that artificial light can change hatchlings' travel direction? Explain why.	**The peer-reviewed marine biology study, because researchers compared hatchling paths on dark beaches and beaches with artificial lights.**
3	Why is Harbor Beach's lighting ordinance useful but not enough to answer Maya's original question?	**It shows that local officials regulate beachfront lights, but it did not measure hatchling behavior.**
4	What was Maya's refocused question, and what missing local evidence did it address?	**She asked which lights near Harbor Beach are visible from nesting areas and when they are on. Her earlier sources did not identify visible local lights or count hatchlings at Harbor Beach.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The club can meet Thursday from 3:10 to 3:30 in Room 4 with its supervisor. Source A lists that period, Source B shows Room 4 is free then, and Source C shows the supervisor is available then. These dated records from the people responsible for scheduling, rooms and supervision are directly useful for this limited fictional question. Tuesday does not work because the room is booked and the supervisor is unavailable. The packet does not give room capacity or membership, so my refocused question is whether Room 4 can safely accommodate all club members; I would need the room-capacity record and current club roster.

Preserve all four valid story answers and source-limit explanations. For Your Turn, inspect actual A/B/C notes and a 4–6-sentence supported answer, relevant source reasons, and a refocused question based on a real packet gap. Thursday 3:10–3:30 lies within both the free-room interval 3:00–4:00 and adult availability 3:05–3:40; Tuesday lacks both room and adult. Do not accept invented capacity or membership as known evidence. Equivalent supported gaps and follow-up questions are valid. Fictional practice records are usable for this limited inquiry, not verified real-school claims. A future source plan alone does not complete the task.