Evidence Trail

Trace how researchers build careful answers from trustworthy sources.

ELA.8.C.4.1 "Conduct research to answer a question, drawing on multiple reliable and valid sources and generating additional questions for further research."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle the three sources Maya uses as evidence, and underline the evidence each source provides to answer her question.

Following the Monarch Evidence

1. Researcher Maya asks, "How do city gardens help monarch butterflies?" She begins with sources that have expertise and evidence. A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service page explains that monarch caterpillars eat only milkweed plants. A university extension article describes how native flowering plants provide nectar for adult butterflies. Maya records each source's author, date, and main claim. She does not treat a colorful garden-store advertisement as proof because it tries to sell plants and gives no research details.

2. Next, Maya finds a report from the city parks department. Staff counted adult monarchs in twelve gardens during late summer. Gardens with milkweed and several kinds of native flowers had more monarch sightings than gardens without those plants. This observation supports the two earlier sources, but it does not prove that plants alone caused the difference. Weather, garden size, and the number of times staff visited could also affect the counts. Maya compares the sources before writing a careful answer to her question.

3. Maya's answer is that city gardens can likely help monarchs when they include milkweed for caterpillars and native flowers for adults. Her wording, "can likely help," matches the available evidence without claiming too much. While researching, she notices that the parks report covers only late summer. She generates a new question: "Which garden features support monarchs during spring and fall migration?" To investigate it, Maya would look for migration-season observations from a university, a government wildlife agency, or a well-documented community-science project.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why does Maya reject the garden-store advertisement as strong evidence?

2. What finding in the city parks report supports Maya's answer about gardens?

3. Why does Maya say gardens "can likely help" instead of claiming that the plants alone caused more monarch sightings?

4. What further research question does Maya generate, and what is one suitable type of source for investigating it?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Research packet: fictional Birch art workshop
These classroom-authored records are invented for a limited supply inquiry, not real-school facts.

Source A: coordinator's checked signup and inventory record, October 9, 2026
Eighteen students are registered for a workshop from 1:00 to 1:30. Each needs one brush. The workshop room has 11 usable brushes available for that period.

Source B: art librarian's checked lending record, October 9, 2026
Five additional usable brushes, separate from the room inventory, are available to lend from 12:50 to 1:40. They must be returned by 1:40. The record does not list other available brushes or lenders.

Research whether these records establish enough brushes for all 18 students. Actually read both sources and record source-labeled findings on extra paper. In 3–4 sentences, answer the question using both records, explain why each is directly relevant and usable, and generate one additional research question about a real remaining gap. Retain your notes for your teacher.

ANSWER KEY

Evidence Trail

GRADE 8 · ELA.8.C.4.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle the three sources Maya uses as evidence, and underline the evidence each source provides to answer her question. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why does Maya reject the garden-store advertisement as strong evidence?	**It is trying to sell plants and does not provide research details.**
2	What finding in the city parks report supports Maya's answer about gardens?	**Gardens with milkweed and several kinds of native flowers had more monarch sightings than gardens without those plants.**
3	Why does Maya say gardens "can likely help" instead of claiming that the plants alone caused more monarch sightings?	**The report is an observation, and weather, garden size, and visit frequency could have affected the counts.**
4	What further research question does Maya generate, and what is one suitable type of source for investigating it?	**She asks which garden features support monarchs during spring and fall migration. A university, government wildlife agency, or well-documented community-science project would be suitable.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

My question is whether the Birch art workshop has enough brushes for all 18 students. Source A's checked inventory lists 11 usable room brushes, while Source B's lending record lists 5 separate brushes during an interval covering the entire workshop. These directly relevant records establish 16 brushes, so the listed supply leaves 2 students without brushes and is insufficient. My next question is where the workshop can borrow 2 more usable brushes for that period; another checked lending record could answer the gap.

Preserve equivalent supported source answers in Parts 1–2. For Part 3, inspect actual source-labeled notes, a 3–4-sentence combined answer, relevance/reliability reasons and a genuine follow-up question. Independently verify 11 + 5 = 16 and 18 − 16 = 2; 1:00–1:30 is fully inside 12:50–1:40. Extra brushes are explicitly separate. Do not invent another lender or claim this packet describes the learner's school. A would-use plan alone is insufficient; teacher-supported reading and notes are suitable, with no internet requirement.