Evidence Before Opinion

Evaluate sources, evidence, and attribution in a focused inquiry.

ELA.9.C.4 "Researching"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Local people, proposals, records and observations are fictional classroom examples; named research and health guidance are real. Circle each source named in the passage. Underline the words that explain why Maya trusts, limits, or rejects that source.

A Later Bell?

1 Maya's research question is, "Would moving her high school's start time later improve students' sleep and learning?" She begins with the American Academy of Pediatrics policy statement, written by pediatric sleep experts. The statement recommends that middle and high schools aim to start at 8:30 a.m. or later. Maya records the organization, date, and link. She also finds an anonymous blog post that promises "instant grade gains" but gives no author, data, or citations. Because she cannot check its evidence or expertise, she does not use it.

2 For evidence about outcomes, Maya reads a peer-reviewed 2018 study in Science Advances. Researchers compared different groups of biology students at two Seattle high schools before and after a 55-minute start-time delay in 2016. Median school-night sleep was 34 minutes longer afterward, and median biology grades were 4.5 percentage points higher. Maya does not treat one city as proof for every school or assume the schedule alone caused the difference. She compares the study with a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention webpage recommending 8 to 10 hours of sleep daily for ages 13 to 17. The CDC page supports why sleep matters, while the Seattle study directly addresses her question about a later schedule.

③ To test an alternative viewpoint, Maya reads her district school board's meeting minutes, a primary source that records concerns about bus routes, athletics, and student jobs. The minutes show what local officials discussed, but they do not prove that a later start would fail. In her report, Maya will state that logistical costs are a possible drawback, then separate that concern from the sleep evidence. She will paraphrase the sources in her own words, place quotation marks around any exact language, and cite each source. Her conclusion will explain that stronger sleep evidence supports studying a later start locally.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which source is least reliable for Maya's report? Give two details from the passage that explain why she rejects it.

2. Why are the school board meeting minutes useful to Maya, even though they do not prove that a later start would fail?

3. Which source most directly answers Maya's question about outcomes from a later start time? State the two results Maya found in that source.

4. How should Maya handle exact words from a source differently from information she restates in her own words?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Research packet: fictional Cedar club

These checked classroom-authored records are invented, not real-school findings.

Source A: coordinator's registration record, October 9, 2026. Twenty students are registered for a workshop from 2:00 to 2:30. Each needs one chair. The workshop room has 13 usable chairs.

Source B: librarian's separate lending record, October 9, 2026. Four additional usable chairs are available from 1:50 to 2:40 and must be returned by 2:40.

Source C: facilities access check, October 9, 2026. One door must remain clear. No other available chairs or lenders are listed.

Research whether the recorded chair supply is sufficient. Actually consult all three records and keep source-labeled notes on extra paper. Write a 70–90-word answer combining findings, explaining each record's relevance and limits, considering access as an alternative concern, and naming the narrower next question raised by the findings. Paraphrase and attribute facts; quote any exact words accurately.

ANSWER KEY

Evidence Before Opinion

GRADE 9 · ELA.9.C.4

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Local people, proposals, records and observations are fictional classroom examples; named research and health guidance are real. Circle each source named in the passage. Underline the words that explain why Maya trusts, limits, or rejects that source. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which source is least reliable for Maya's report? Give two details from the passage that explain why she rejects it.	**The anonymous blog post. It has no author, data, or citations, so Maya cannot check its evidence or expertise.**
2	Why are the school board meeting minutes useful to Maya, even though they do not prove that a later start would fail?	**They are a primary source showing the concerns local officials discussed, including bus routes, athletics, and student jobs.**
3	Which source most directly answers Maya's question about outcomes from a later start time? State the two results Maya found in that source.	**The peer-reviewed Science Advances study. Median school-night sleep was 34 minutes longer after the change, and median biology grades were 4.5 percentage points higher, comparing different student groups.**
4	How should Maya handle exact words from a source differently from information she restates in her own words?	**She should put exact language in quotation marks and cite it. She should paraphrase restated information in her own words and cite the source.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Cedar workshop needs 20 chairs. Source A records 13 room chairs, while Source B lists 4 separate borrowed chairs available throughout the workshop, establishing 17 chairs and a shortage of 3. These checked records directly answer the quantity and timing questions. Source C's access check adds a legitimate concern: the door must stay clear, but it does not supply more chairs. The narrower next question is where to borrow 3 usable chairs for that period without obstructing the door.

Accept equivalent explanations that accurately evaluate a source's authority, evidence, purpose, or relevance using passage details. For Part 3, inspect actual source-labeled notes and a 70–90-word combined answer using all three records, their relevance/limits, the access concern and a refined follow-up question. Verify 13 + 4 = 17 and 20 − 17 = 3; the lending interval covers the full workshop. No additional lender is established. A future plan alone is insufficient. Teacher-supported packet reading is acceptable. Preserve the original source caveats: local people and records fictional; Seattle compared different cohorts and did not establish sole causation; 82% − 77.5% = 4.5 percentage points. Original reference links remain CDC age-specific duration guidance: https://www.cdc.gov/sleep/about/index.html . Sources: AAP (2014), https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25156998/ ; Dunster et al. (2018), https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.aau6200 .