Monarch Source Trail

Practice choosing, tracking, and combining research sources.

6.T.RA.1.b "Conduct research by locating, gathering, curating, and integrating information from credible sources (including print, digital, and personal communication) about texts and related topics. (I)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline facts Elena gathers from sources, circle details that help show a source is credible, and number 1 and 2 beside the two source names that support the same research point.

Following a Research Path

1. For a report about how monarch butterflies travel, Elena began with a print book from her school library. The book, Monarchs on the Move, listed its author, publisher, and publication date. Elena checked that the author was a biologist and noted the book was published in 2022. She gathered facts about the butterflies' fall trip to central Mexico and their need for milkweed. In her notebook, she copied the facts in her own words and wrote the page number. This record would help her find the information again.

2. Next, Elena used a digital page from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The page named the agency and gave a date when it was updated. It explained that monarchs need nectar during migration and need milkweed because it is the only plant their caterpillars eat. Elena also interviewed Mr. Chen, a volunteer at a local nature center who leads monarch counts each September. She wrote the date of the interview and separated his observations from facts she could verify in published sources.

3. Elena then compared the sources before drafting her report. The book and agency page both supported the idea that monarchs depend on milkweed, so she included that point and cited both sources. Mr. Chen's count notes described fewer monarchs at his site after a week of heavy rain. Elena used this as a local observation, not proof that rain changes the whole migration. By combining the sources carefully, she could explain a broad need of monarchs and a specific event seen in her community.

SCHOOL GARDEN INQUIRY: CLASSROOM-AUTHORED FICTIONAL RECORDS

Source and location	Record to consult
A: Ms. Lee, class survey summary, Sept. 8, page 1	18 of 24 students requested a garden reading bench. Each answered once. Of the 18, 12 preferred the east garden and 6 the west garden. This survey covers one class.
B: Mr. Chen, signed garden inspection, Sept. 9, entry 2	He inspected both areas at noon. The east garden has a level paved area under a roof; the west garden has an uneven grassy area with no roof. He did not measure temperatures or costs.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which two details did Elena check to help decide whether the print book was credible?

2. What did Elena record to keep track of information from her sources, and how did she handle Mr. Chen's statements?

3. What research point was supported by two sources, and which two sources supported it?

4. Why did Elena avoid using Mr. Chen's count notes as proof that rain changes the whole migration?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Begin with the supplied school-garden inquiry: Where could a reading bench serve the class? Locate relevant information in both records. Record one finding from each in your own words, including its source, date and page/entry. Combine the findings in two sentences that answer the question and state a limit. Treat these as fictional classroom records, not real school data. Then choose a local animal, plant or environmental question and make the original three-source plan: print, digital and personal communication, explaining each source's usefulness and how you would track and combine future information. You may use equivalent teacher-provided sources for the completed inquiry.

ANSWER KEY

Monarch Source Trail

GRADE 6 · 6.T.RA.1.b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline facts Elena gathers from sources, circle details that help show a source is credible, and number 1 and 2 beside the two source names that support the same research point. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which two details did Elena check to help decide whether the print book was credible?	**She checked that the author was a biologist and that the book was published in 2022.**
2	What did Elena record to keep track of information from her sources, and how did she handle Mr. Chen's statements?	**She wrote facts in her own words with page numbers, recorded the interview date, and kept Mr. Chen's observations separate from published facts she could verify.**
3	What research point was supported by two sources, and which two sources supported it?	**The point that monarchs depend on milkweed was supported by the print book and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service page.**
4	Why did Elena avoid using Mr. Chen's count notes as proof that rain changes the whole migration?	**His notes described one local site after one rainy week, so they were a local observation rather than proof about the entire migration.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Completed inquiry notes: A, Ms. Lee, Sept. 8, p. 1: 18 of 24 students requested a bench, and 12 of those preferred the east garden. B, Mr. Chen, Sept. 9, entry 2: the east area is level and roofed; the west is uneven and unroofed.

Combined answer: The east garden is worth investigating for a bench because Ms. Lee's survey records the most requests there and Mr. Chen's inspection identifies a level covered area. This does not establish a schoolwide preference or prove a temperature/cost benefit; it concerns one class and one inspection.

Future three-source plan: Question: How do city trees help cool a neighborhood? Print: a recent library book by an urban forestry scientist, useful for background facts. Digital: a dated U.S. Forest Service webpage, credible because a government science agency publishes it. Personal communication: an interview with the city arborist, useful for observations from local streets. I would record each author or agency, date, and page number or link. I would use the book and webpage for a shared claim and label the arborist's report about one block as a local observation.

Accept different reasonable topics and sources if the student explains why each source is credible or useful. Look for all three source types, source-tracking details, and a clear distinction between combined evidence and a local observation. First require actual consultation of the printed or equivalent accessible records, two relevant source-labeled findings with dates/locations, and an integrated answer with a supported limit. The packet is explicitly fictional practice, not authenticated school data. Preserve the separate three-source planning extension; a future plan alone is not the completed inquiry.