Search Word Detective

Choose terms that match a research goal.

6-8.WHST.8.a "Use search terms effectively."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two dates or place names and circle two topic words that could help you narrow a search about Chicago's river.

Searching for a River's Story

1. Typing a whole question into a search box can work, but choosing a few precise words often brings better results. Suppose you want to know why salt can melt ice on a sidewalk. Searching *salt* might bring up recipes and nutrition facts. Searching *how salt lowers water freezing point* focuses on the process you need. Add a place, date, source type, or exact name when it matters. Leave out words that do not change what you want to find. If results miss your target, revise your terms.

2. In the late 1800s, Chicago drew drinking water from Lake Michigan. The Chicago River also carried sewage toward the lake, raising fears that the city's water supply could be polluted. Engineers dug the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, which opened in 1900. The canal helped reverse the river's flow, sending water away from the lake. The job took years of digging through earth and rock. A search for the project could focus on the city's drinking water, the canal's construction, or the change in the river's direction.

3. The diverted water did not vanish after it left Chicago. It moved through the Des Plaines and Illinois Rivers toward the Mississippi River. Communities downstream worried that Chicago's waste might reach them. The story also left a visual record: construction photographs from the 1890s show workers and machinery at the canal. Today, photos of boats on the Chicago River are much easier to stumble across online. Someone researching the old construction images needs to separate those images from modern river scenes, while another researcher might seek reports about downstream concerns.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Write a 4 to 8 word search for why Chicago reversed its river. Include a cause and the city's drinking water source.

2. Write a 4 to 8 word search for when the canal opened and what changed about the river.

3. Write a 4 to 8 word search for concerns raised by communities downstream of Chicago.

4. Write a 4 to 8 word search for old images of the canal being built, not present-day boat photos.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a science or history question that is not about road salt or Chicago's river. Write your question, a broad first search, and a more focused search of 4 to 7 words, then explain in one sentence why the second search would work better.

ANSWER KEY

Search Word Detective

GRADES 6-8 · 6-8.WHST.8.a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two dates or place names and circle two topic words that could help you narrow a search about Chicago's river. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Write a 4 to 8 word search for why Chicago reversed its river. Include a cause and the city's drinking water source.	**Chicago River reversal sewage Lake Michigan drinking water**
2	Write a 4 to 8 word search for when the canal opened and what changed about the river.	**Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal 1900 river reversal**
3	Write a 4 to 8 word search for concerns raised by communities downstream of Chicago.	**Chicago sewage Des Plaines Illinois rivers downstream concerns**
4	Write a 4 to 8 word search for old images of the canal being built, not present-day boat photos.	**Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal 1890s construction photographs**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Question: How do mangrove trees survive salty water? Broad search: mangrove trees. Focused search: mangrove roots filter salt seawater adaptations. The focused search names the plant, the process, and the water condition instead of returning general facts.

Accept other 4 to 8 word searches that match each goal using relevant details from the passage. For Your Turn, the focused search must contain 4 to 7 words and be more specific than the broad search.