Shade Sail Claims

Read three sources and test what their claims can support.

6-8.WHST.8.b "Assess the credibility and accuracy of each source."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details that help you check a source's claim, and circle two details that make a claim less certain.

How Much Cooler?

1. At the fictional Cedar Middle School, students heard a claim: a new shade sail makes the blacktop 30°F cooler every afternoon. The science club checked the surface at noon on three sunny days in September. Club members used the same infrared thermometer for both spots and recorded shaded readings of 91°F, 95°F, and 94°F. Unshaded readings taken minutes later were 112°F, 116°F, and 113°F. The club saved the dates, weather notes, and readings in a notebook, but did not test mornings or cloudy days.

2. The shade sail company posted, "Our sail cools school blacktop by 30°F every afternoon." Its website names Cedar's playground and calls the sail "science tested." A short note below the ad says its number came from one test at a different school in July. The note does not give the time, thermometer type, or readings from that test. The company knows how it built the sail, but it also earns money when schools buy one. The site includes product prices and a form for school orders.

3. A city parks office report in the case file describes tests at four public courts, not at Cedar. Workers compared surface temperatures under shade sails and in nearby sun at noon on ten clear summer days. They found that shaded spots averaged 18°F cooler, though the difference changed from day to day. The report lists the measuring tool and daily results. The office does not sell shade sails. The report is available to the public, along with the blank form workers used to record each test.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What makes the science club's temperature comparisons fair, and why can't its record confirm the claim about every afternoon?

2. How might the company's interest affect its credibility? What missing detail makes its 30°F number hard to check?

3. Why is the parks report easier to check than the company's ad? Why can't it prove what happens at Cedar?

4. Which source gives the strongest evidence about Cedar's 30°F claim? What do its numbers show?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Another school claims, “Our shade sail keeps the blacktop cooler even on cloudy mornings.” Write three or four sentences explaining how you would check that claim, including a source you would consult, how you would judge its credibility, and what measurements would test its accuracy.

ANSWER KEY

Shade Sail Claims

GRADES 6-8 · 6-8.WHST.8.b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details that help you check a source's claim, and circle two details that make a claim less certain. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What makes the science club's temperature comparisons fair, and why can't its record confirm the claim about every afternoon?	**The club used the same thermometer for both spots and took readings minutes apart. It tested only at noon on three sunny days, not every afternoon.**
2	How might the company's interest affect its credibility? What missing detail makes its 30°F number hard to check?	**The company earns money from shade sail sales. Its note leaves out the test readings, time, and thermometer type.**
3	Why is the parks report easier to check than the company's ad? Why can't it prove what happens at Cedar?	**The report provides the tool and daily results. Its tests took place at other sites, only at noon on clear summer days.**
4	Which source gives the strongest evidence about Cedar's 30°F claim? What do its numbers show?	**The science club tested at Cedar. Its shaded readings were 21°F, 21°F, and 19°F below the unshaded readings, not 30°F.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would ask a science class to record blacktop temperatures under the sail and in a nearby unshaded spot on several cloudy mornings. I would trust its report more if it listed the dates, times, tool, and every reading. I would compare readings taken at nearly the same time to check whether the shaded spot was cooler. Equal or higher readings in the shade would challenge the claim.

Accept other supported judgments about credibility if students cite details from the passage. For the open task, look for a checkable source and paired measurements on cloudy mornings.