Follow the Evidence

Read a model for finding, checking, and crediting sources.

7.W.8 "Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources. Use search terms effectively. Assess the credibility and accuracy of each source. Quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the more focused search terms, circle clues about each source's credibility, and number the two places where the writer credits ideas from sources.

Should Our School Plant an Oak?

(1) Our class wanted to know whether planting an oak could help insects near the school. Searching "trees" brought up lumber prices and tree-care ads. The narrower search "native oak caterpillars school garden" led to the National Wildlife Federation's Native Plant Finder, a digital tool that lists plants by ZIP code and the butterfly and moth caterpillars they support. I also checked a print book by ecologist Douglas Tallamy. His book focuses on oaks and their relationships with wildlife, so it could help explain why the tool's rankings matter.

(2) The two sources support a careful claim: native oaks can provide food for many caterpillars (Tallamy; National Wildlife Federation). That sentence puts the idea in my own words instead of copying either source. I trust the book's named author and publisher more than an unsigned store ad that says every oak will thrive anywhere. I also trust the wildlife group's tool for comparing plants by ZIP code, but its rankings do not tell me whether a particular schoolyard has enough space, sunlight, or water for a tree.

(3) My conclusion is not "plant any oak tomorrow." I would first check which oak species are native to our area and whether our site fits that species. The sources explain insect benefits, but a local planting guide would help check growing conditions. A Works Cited list lets readers find the sources behind my claim. Tallamy, Douglas W. *The Nature of Oaks: The Rich Ecology of Our Most Essential Native Trees*. Timber Press, 2021. National Wildlife Federation. "Native Plant Finder." *National Wildlife Federation*, nativeplantfinder.nwf.org/. Accessed 7 Nov. 2026.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which search terms are more likely to find evidence about oaks and insects, and why?

2. Name one clue in the passage that helps you assess the credibility of the book and one that helps you assess the digital tool.

3. How does the sentence about oaks providing food for caterpillars use information from the sources without presenting their ideas as the writer's alone?

4. Why would the writer need another source before recommending an oak for a specific spot at school?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write four sentences to the school garden team about a possible oak planting. Paraphrase one useful idea from each cited source with parenthetical citations, include a specific search query for a local planting guide, and explain how you would check that guide's credibility.

ANSWER KEY

Follow the Evidence

GRADE 7 · 7.W.8

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the more focused search terms, circle clues about each source's credibility, and number the two places where the writer credits ideas from sources. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which search terms are more likely to find evidence about oaks and insects, and why?	**"Native oak caterpillars school garden" is more likely to help because it names the tree, the insects, and the setting, unlike "trees."**
2	Name one clue in the passage that helps you assess the credibility of the book and one that helps you assess the digital tool.	**The book names its author, ecologist Douglas Tallamy, and its publisher. The tool comes from the National Wildlife Federation and shows plant information by ZIP code.**
3	How does the sentence about oaks providing food for caterpillars use information from the sources without presenting their ideas as the writer's alone?	**It states the claim in the writer's own words and credits both sources with a parenthetical citation.**
4	Why would the writer need another source before recommending an oak for a specific spot at school?	**The two sources explain insect benefits, but they do not show whether that spot has suitable space, sunlight, and water for a particular oak species.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I propose exploring whether an oak could grow beside our school garden. Tallamy's book explains that oaks have important relationships with wildlife (Tallamy). The National Wildlife Federation's tool lets us compare local plants by the caterpillars they support (National Wildlife Federation), so I would search "county extension native oak planting sunlight space." Before using a guide I find, I would check who wrote it, when it was updated, and whether its advice applies to our location.

Accept other specific search terms and credibility clues supported by the passage. In Part 3, look for four sentences, an attributed paraphrase from each source, a local search query, and a reasonable way to check the new guide.