Behind the Bin

Check what each source can actually prove.

8.W.8.b "Assess the credibility and accuracy of each source."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one detail about how each source gathered information. Circle the seller's claim about total scraps and the detail in the log that tests it, then label both circles 1.

Did the Compost Bin Work?

1. At fictional Brookside Middle School, the newspaper is checking whether a new compost bin changed lunch waste. Source A is a custodial log signed by the worker who weighed the lunch food scraps sent to the landfill. It records 180 pounds during the first full week of October 2025 and 120 pounds during the same week of 2026. The compost bin arrived in September 2026. The log counts only scraps sent to the landfill, not scraps put in the compost bin, and nobody else checked the weights.

2. Source B is a newsletter from the company that sold Brookside its compost bin. It announces, "Our bin made Brookside's cafeteria waste-free in one month." To support that claim, the newsletter cites the log's 120-pound figure but calls it "the total food scraps produced" in October 2026. The company does not explain how it measured all scraps or how it ruled out other causes of the change. Its business could benefit if other schools believe the program succeeded.

3. Source C is a report by a student journalist who watched lunch cleanup on two days in October 2026. The student weighed 32 pounds of scraps placed in the compost bin across those two days and wrote down the readings immediately. The student did not watch cleanup on the other three school days or weigh the scraps sent to the landfill. Brookside served about the same number of lunches during the two October weeks, but its menu changed. The newspaper must decide which claims these sources actually support.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What makes Source A useful for checking landfill scraps, and what is one limit to its credibility?

2. Which claim in Source B conflicts with Source A? Use a number to explain the conflict.

3. Can Source C establish how many pounds Brookside composted during the entire week? Explain.

4. Do these sources prove that the bin alone caused the drop in landfill scraps? What detail makes you cautious?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A classmate says, "Every middle school should buy this bin because it will cut landfill scraps by one-third." Write a four- or five-sentence note assessing that claim. Use evidence from at least two sources and name one piece of evidence you would still need.

ANSWER KEY

Behind the Bin

GRADE 8 · 8.W.8.b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one detail about how each source gathered information. Circle the seller's claim about total scraps and the detail in the log that tests it, then label both circles 1. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What makes Source A useful for checking landfill scraps, and what is one limit to its credibility?	**The worker weighed the landfill scraps and signed the log, but nobody else checked the weights.**
2	Which claim in Source B conflicts with Source A? Use a number to explain the conflict.	**The waste-free claim conflicts with the log's record of 120 pounds of scraps sent to the landfill in October 2026.**
3	Can Source C establish how many pounds Brookside composted during the entire week? Explain.	**No. The student measured 32 pounds across two days but did not watch cleanup on the other three school days.**
4	Do these sources prove that the bin alone caused the drop in landfill scraps? What detail makes you cautious?	**No. The menu changed between the two weeks, so the sources cannot show that the bin alone caused the drop.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Brookside's signed log shows landfill scraps fell from 180 to 120 pounds, a one-third drop for the weeks measured. That supports a local drop, but it does not prove the bin caused it because the menu changed. The seller's newsletter is less credible as evidence for buying bins because the seller benefits and wrongly calls 120 pounds the total scraps. The student journalist's measurements show some composting happened, but they cover only two days. I would want full-week compost weights and results from other schools before recommending the bin to every school.

Accept other supported credibility judgments, such as noting that the student recorded measurements immediately but observed only two days. A strong open response distinguishes the measured landfill drop from claims about its cause or likely results at other schools.