Focus the Question

Use secondary questions to focus a major research question.

8.12.C "refine the major research question, if necessary, guided by the answers to a secondary set of questions;"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline Maya's first major research question and her revised question. Number the four secondary questions in paragraph 1, then circle the two findings that most clearly guided her revision.

Maya Refocuses Her Research

1. When Maya began researching school start times, her major question was broad: "How do later school start times affect teenagers?" She created secondary questions to focus her search: How much sleep do teens need? What time do students currently begin classes? Do later starts change attendance? What problems might a district face? Her teacher explained that answers to these smaller questions could reveal which part of the topic mattered most. Maya planned to revise her major question after gathering evidence, rather than treating her first wording as final.

2. Maya found that the American Academy of Sleep Medicine recommends 8 to 10 hours of sleep for teenagers. In her district, high school classes began at 7:20 a.m., and a student survey reported that many students slept fewer than eight hours on school nights. A report from another district described improved attendance after a later start, but it also noted bus schedules and after-school activities had to change. These answers moved Maya away from trying to study every possible effect of later starts.

3. Because sleep and attendance had the strongest evidence in her notes, Maya refined her major research question. She wrote, "How might moving our district's high school start time later affect students' sleep and attendance?" This question was narrower than her first one. It named a local setting, selected two effects supported by her secondary research, and left room for her to investigate transportation challenges as a related limit. Maya did not claim that a later start would automatically solve every problem for every teenager.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What was Maya's first major research question, and what did she plan to do before revising it?

2. Which two areas had the strongest evidence in Maya's notes?

3. Give two ways Maya's revised major research question is more focused than her first question.

4. Which secondary question connects to transportation challenges, and why did Maya keep transportation as a related limit instead of her main focus?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A student begins with the question, "How could our school reduce plastic waste?" Research shows that students buy about 300 single-use water bottles each week, a nearby school used fewer disposable bottles after adding filling stations and offering reusable bottles, and filling stations require money and filter upkeep. Write exactly two sentences: a refined major research question, then an explanation of how two findings guided it.

Focus the Question

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline Maya's first major research question and her revised question. Number the four secondary questions in paragraph 1, then circle the two findings that most clearly guided her revision. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What was Maya's first major research question, and what did she plan to do before revising it?	**Her first question was "How do later school start times affect teenagers?" She planned to gather evidence from her secondary questions before revising it.**
2	Which two areas had the strongest evidence in Maya's notes?	**Students' sleep and attendance.**
3	Give two ways Maya's revised major research question is more focused than her first question.	**It focuses on her own district and on two specific effects, sleep and attendance, instead of every possible effect on teenagers.**
4	Which secondary question connects to transportation challenges, and why did Maya keep transportation as a related limit instead of her main focus?	**It connects to "What problems might a district face?" Maya kept it as a related limit because sleep and attendance had the strongest evidence.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

To what extent could installing water bottle filling stations and providing reusable bottles reduce single-use bottle purchases at our school? The weekly bottle purchases and the nearby school's results guided the focus on bottles and filling stations.

Accept revised questions that narrow plastic waste to a specific local action and measurable effect. The explanation should connect at least two provided findings to the student's narrower question.