

Evidence Under Pressure

Compare sources before drawing a conclusion.

12.R.1.C "Objectively evaluate primary and secondary sources for their credibility, reliability, accuracy, usefulness, and limitations; that includes identifying the main and supporting ideas, points of view, conflicting information..."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the sentence that states Maya's main research question, circle evidence each source provides, and number details that show a source's limit or possible bias. These marks will help you judge what each source can and cannot prove.

Reading the Eruption Record

- ① For a report on the May 18, 1980, eruption of Mount St. Helens, Maya compares three sources rather than treating any one as complete. Her main question is how the eruption changed the landscape near Spirit Lake. A U.S. Geological Survey, or USGS, scientist's field notebook, written during later site visits, records measurements of ash depth and mapped deposits. Because it preserves observations from a trained geologist, it is a primary source for those visits. Yet the notebook cannot show what every resident saw during the eruption, and its technical focus may leave out human experiences.
- ② An oral-history interview offers a different view. In 2005, a Spirit Lake survivor recalled that the lake rose like a wall after the blast and carried logs across the water. The statement is a primary source for the survivor's memory and perspective, not a measurement of wave height. Its vivid detail makes it useful for explaining personal danger, but the interview occurred twenty-five years after the event. Memory can change, and the speaker may emphasize the most frightening moment. The interview supports Maya's landscape question, but it does not prove the exact size or timing of the wave.
- ③ A later USGS professional paper, based on field surveys, aerial photographs, and other evidence, states that the eruption triggered a massive debris avalanche that entered Spirit Lake and displaced water. This secondary source synthesizes many records, so it is more useful than one recollection for checking broad physical changes. Still, its scientific point of view centers on geologic processes, not on survivors' losses. If Maya found a social-media post claiming that Spirit Lake vanished permanently, she should reject that claim as inaccurate. The lake was drastically altered, but it remained and later refilled. By comparing evidence, purpose, and limits, Maya can make a cautious conclusion.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What is Maya's main research question? Give two details from different sources that could help answer it.

2 Why is the scientist's field notebook a primary source, and what is one limitation of using it?

3 Compare the oral-history interview and the USGS professional paper. How does each source's point of view affect its usefulness and limitation?

4 What inaccurate claim does the social-media post make, and what passage evidence contradicts it?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose a local historical event or environmental change. In 90 to 120 words, state a research question, evaluate one primary and one secondary source you could use, name each source's point of view and one limitation, and explain how you would check one claim.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the sentence that states Maya's main research question, circle evidence each source provides, and number details that show a source's limit or possible bias. These marks will help you judge what each source can and cannot prove. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is Maya's main research question? Give two details from different sources that could help answer it.	Her question is how the eruption changed the landscape near Spirit Lake. Supporting details include the field notebook's ash-depth measurements and mapped deposits, and the USGS paper's evidence that a debris avalanche entered the lake and displaced water.
2	Why is the scientist's field notebook a primary source, and what is one limitation of using it?	It records a trained geologist's own observations during site visits. Its technical focus may omit human experiences, and it cannot show what every resident saw during the eruption.
3	Compare the oral-history interview and the USGS professional paper. How does each source's point of view affect its usefulness and limitation?	The survivor's interview is useful for personal danger and experience, but later memory may not establish exact wave size or timing. The USGS paper is useful for broad physical changes because it synthesizes evidence, but its geologic focus gives less attention to survivors' losses.
4	What inaccurate claim does the social-media post make, and what passage evidence contradicts it?	The post claims that Spirit Lake vanished permanently. The passage states that the lake was drastically altered but remained and later refilled.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

My question is how a proposed bus-route reduction would affect riders in my town. I would use city council meeting minutes as a primary source because they record officials' stated reasons and votes. Their point of view is institutional, and they may not include riders who could not attend. I would also use a local newspaper's data-based analysis as a secondary source. It could compare schedules, ridership, and neighborhood access, but its conclusions may depend on which data it selects. To check a claim that no riders would lose service, I would compare route maps, public comments, and the transit agency's schedule.

Accept equivalent answers that distinguish a source's evidence from what the source cannot reliably establish. For Part 3, accept varied topics and sources when the response includes a clear question, accurate source classification, point of view, limitation, and a reasonable verification method.