

Questions Beneath Tracks

Use evidence to turn a familiar event into an investigation.

S.CE.c “developing questions, enhancing curiosity, and engaging in critical thinking and analysis;”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details a researcher could investigate, and circle one sentence that shows why a single source may be incomplete. These marks show how focused questions and source limits guide an investigation.

Investigating the First Subway

- ① In 1904, city leaders in New York opened the first subway line, which ran from City Hall to 145th Street. Newspapers called it a modern answer to crowded streets. Yet a historian studying the opening day would ask more than whether riders liked the trains. Who could afford the five-cent fare? Which neighborhoods had stations? Did workers save time, or did construction disrupt their homes and jobs? These questions turn a familiar event into an investigation about access and change.
- ② One useful source is a photograph showing a subway entrance surrounded by well-dressed crowds. It may suggest that many people were excited, but it cannot prove that all New Yorkers benefited. A photographer may have chosen a busy, attractive location. Fare records, workers' letters, and city maps could add different evidence. Comparing sources helps researchers notice what is missing. Instead of asking, “What does this photograph show?” a stronger question is, “Whose experience does this photograph leave out?”
- ③ Questions should be focused enough to investigate and open enough to allow several possible answers. For example, “Did the subway help people?” is broad and may hide differences among riders. “How did the first subway line affect travel time for workers living near its stations?” names a group, a place, and an effect to examine. A researcher could then seek schedules, wages, and personal accounts. The goal is not to collect facts that support an early opinion. It is to test ideas with evidence and revise thinking when evidence disagrees.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Why can the photograph of the subway entrance not prove that all New Yorkers benefited from the subway?

2 How could fare records, workers' letters, and city maps improve an investigation of the first subway?

3 What makes the question about workers living near stations stronger than the question, "Did the subway help people?"

4 What should a researcher do when evidence disagrees with an early opinion?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose a change in your school or community that you know about. Write one focused question about its effects, then name two sources you would use and explain what each source could help you find out.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline two details a researcher could investigate, and circle one sentence that shows why a single source may be incomplete. These marks show how focused questions and source limits guide an investigation. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why can the photograph of the subway entrance not prove that all New Yorkers benefited from the subway?	The photograph shows only one crowd at one location, and the photographer may have chosen a busy, attractive place.
2	How could fare records, workers' letters, and city maps improve an investigation of the first subway?	They could provide different kinds of evidence and help researchers notice experiences or information missing from one photograph.
3	What makes the question about workers living near stations stronger than the question, "Did the subway help people?"	It focuses on a specific group, place, and effect, so a researcher can investigate it with evidence.
4	What should a researcher do when evidence disagrees with an early opinion?	The researcher should revise their thinking based on the evidence.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

How has the new bike lane on Oak Street affected travel time for students who bike to school? I would use travel-time logs from before and after the lane opened because they show measured changes. I would also interview student cyclists because their accounts could explain safety concerns or route changes.

Accept focused questions that name a group, place or situation, and an effect to investigate. Accept two reasonable sources with explanations of the distinct evidence each source could provide.