

Clues Ask Questions

Use evidence to ask stronger questions about the past.

S.USII.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 pieces of evidence, circle the question in paragraph 2, and number two claims or possible explanations that need more evidence, so you can tell evidence from conclusions.

Investigating Cahokia

- ① About one thousand years ago, Cahokia was a large city near the Mississippi River, across from present-day St. Louis. Its people built more than one hundred earthen mounds. The largest, Monk's Mound, is about 100 feet tall. Archaeologists do not have written records from Cahokia's residents. Instead, they study clues such as building remains, tools, pottery, food bones, and the places where people were buried. Each clue can lead to a new question about the past.
- ② Near one mound, archaeologists found small pieces of copper, stone hammers, and clay molds. These objects suggest that skilled workers may have shaped copper there. That is an inference, or a conclusion based on evidence, not a proven fact. A curious investigator might ask, “Were these objects used in one workshop, or were they carried here later?” The same evidence could support more than one idea, so researchers compare it with evidence from other places at Cahokia.
- ③ Cahokia changed after about 1200 CE, and its population became much smaller by 1350 CE. Scientists are still studying why. Possible factors include floods, drought, changes in trade, conflict, and disease. No single explanation has been proven. To analyze a claim, investigators ask what evidence supports it and what evidence might be missing. For example, evidence of a flood can show that flooding occurred, but it cannot by itself prove that flooding caused every family to leave.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Name two kinds of clues archaeologists study when they investigate Cahokia.

2 Is the idea that skilled workers shaped copper near the mound a proven fact? Use information from the passage to explain.

3 What question does the passage say an investigator might ask about the copper objects?

4 Why can evidence of a flood not prove that flooding caused every family to leave Cahokia?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose one possible reason Cahokia's population decreased. Write one investigation question, name two kinds of evidence researchers could examine, and explain how one kind of evidence could help evaluate the idea.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline two pieces of evidence, circle the question in paragraph 2, and number two claims or possible explanations that need more evidence, so you can tell evidence from conclusions. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Name two kinds of clues archaeologists study when they investigate Cahokia.	Any two: building remains, tools, pottery, food bones, or burial locations.
2	Is the idea that skilled workers shaped copper near the mound a proven fact? Use information from the passage to explain.	No. It is an inference based on the copper pieces, stone hammers, and clay molds.
3	What question does the passage say an investigator might ask about the copper objects?	Were the objects used in one workshop, or were they carried there later?
4	Why can evidence of a flood not prove that flooding caused every family to leave Cahokia?	A flood shows that flooding occurred, but other factors could also have affected why people left.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Did a long drought happen near Cahokia before its population became smaller? Researchers could examine tree rings from the region and sediment from nearby lakes or wetlands. Dry-period clues in those records could support the idea that drought occurred, but they would not prove drought was the only reason people left.

Accept any two accurate clues in Question 1 and explanations that distinguish evidence from an inference or claim. For the open response, accept reasonable investigation questions and evidence types, as long as the student explains how evidence could support or limit an explanation.