

Source Sleuths

Compare evidence, credibility, accuracy, and possible bias.

6.1.f.ii "obtaining, evaluating, and communicating information gather, read, and synthesize information from multiple appropriate sources and assess the credibility, accuracy, and possible bias of each publication"

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline evidence that makes a source more or less trustworthy. Circle each claim that needs to be checked, then use your marks to compare the publications.

Which Sources Support a Pollinator Garden?

- ① In April, the Green Team asked whether adding native flowering plants near the school garden would help pollinators. They found a fact sheet from the state university extension service. The sheet explained that native plants can provide nectar and pollen for local insects, especially when several species bloom in different seasons. It cited studies and listed the authors, date, and references. Because extension scientists share research for the public, the team considered this source credible, although it did not measure the schoolyard itself.
- ② A native-plant nursery's website said that a garden with only its seed packets would attract three times more butterflies. The page showed bright photos and customer comments, but it gave no study, author, or method for the number. The nursery sells the packets, so its financial goal could lead it to emphasize benefits. The claim might be possible, but the team could not check its accuracy. They treated the website as an idea for plant choices, not as strong evidence about butterfly numbers.
- ③ Finally, the team read a report from the county parks department. Park staff counted butterflies for ten minutes each week at four prairie gardens and four mowed lawns during one summer. The report included dates, methods, and totals, and it found more butterflies at the prairie gardens. This was useful local evidence, but one summer and eight sites are limited. Together, the university sheet and parks report supported planting varied native flowers. The nursery page did not add reliable proof, though its plant list could be checked elsewhere.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What two details from the university extension fact sheet make it more credible?

2 What information was missing from the nursery website that made its butterfly-number claim hard to check?

3 What possible bias could affect the nursery website's claim? Explain why.

4 Which two publications did the team use together to support planting varied native flowers? Give one limit of the parks report.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose a school environmental question. Name three publications you would use to investigate it, assess each source for credibility, accuracy, or possible bias, and state a conclusion the evidence could support.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline evidence that makes a source more or less trustworthy. Circle each claim that needs to be checked, then use your marks to compare the publications. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What two details from the university extension fact sheet make it more credible?	It cited studies and listed the authors, date, and references.
2	What information was missing from the nursery website that made its butterfly-number claim hard to check?	It gave no study, author, or method for the number.
3	What possible bias could affect the nursery website's claim? Explain why.	The nursery sells the seed packets, so it may emphasize benefits to encourage people to buy them.
4	Which two publications did the team use together to support planting varied native flowers? Give one limit of the parks report.	The team used the university extension fact sheet and the county parks department report. The parks report covered only one summer and eight sites.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Question: Should our school add shade trees near the playground? A city forestry department guide is credible because it gives tree-care data and names its authors. A university study is more accurate if it explains how temperatures were measured. A tree company's advertisement may be biased because it sells trees, so I would check its claims. If the guide and study both show that trees lower surface temperatures, I would recommend planting trees after checking which species grow well here.

Accept different school environmental questions and appropriate publications. A strong response identifies three sources, evaluates each with a specific reason, notes possible bias when relevant, and gives a conclusion tied to evidence.