

# Gathering, Evaluating, and Citing Sources

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Score: \_\_\_\_\_ / 10



## Quick Review

When using sources, a strong researcher (1) gathers from MULTIPLE places, (2) judges CREDIBILITY (author expertise, date, publisher, possible bias), (3) takes NOTES that distinguish QUOTES from PARAPHRASES, (4) avoids PLAGIARISM by giving credit even when paraphrasing, and (5) cites sources clearly so a reader could find them again.

## PART 1 — READ

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

### Source excerpts and a student's notes (treat each excerpt as the original text)

SOURCE 1 (from a peer-reviewed children's-health journal, 2024): A growing body of research suggests that middle-school students who walk or bike to school report higher daily energy levels and fewer absences than students who travel by car. In one 2023 study of 4,200 sixth graders, students who actively commuted at least three days a week missed an average of 2.1 fewer school days per year.

SOURCE 2 (from a sneaker company's advertising blog, 2024): Our new shoes are the BEST shoes for active kids! Studies prove that students who wear our brand walk more and feel happier every single day. Order today!

SOURCE 3 (from a 1998 newspaper opinion column): In my view, kids these days don't move enough, and walking to school would solve almost every problem they have. Back when I was in school, we walked, and that's that.

STUDENT NOTE (taken by Aleena while reading Source 1): Active commuting (walking, biking) is linked to fewer absences. A 2023 study of 4,200 sixth graders found students who actively commuted three or more days per week missed about 2.1 fewer days per year. - Children's-Health Journal, 2024.

## PART 2 — PRACTICE

Read the source excerpts and notes. Answer the questions about credibility, note-taking, paraphrasing, and citation.

- Which source is the MOST CREDIBLE for a Grade 6 research report on active commuting and student health?
  - SOURCE 1, the peer-reviewed children's-health journal from 2024.
  - SOURCE 2, the sneaker company's advertising blog.
  - SOURCE 3, the 1998 newspaper opinion column.
  - All three are equally credible because they all mention students.



2. What is the MAIN credibility problem with SOURCE 2 (the sneaker blog)?
  - A. It uses too many short words.
  - B. It is biased: it is published by a company SELLING shoes, so it has a strong commercial reason to make active commuting look good.
  - C. It is too recent to be trusted.
  - D. It is missing the word *study*.
3. What is the MAIN credibility problem with SOURCE 3 (the 1998 opinion column)?
  - A. It is from a newspaper, and newspapers are never credible.
  - B. It is too short to be useful.
  - C. It is an OPINION column (not a study), and it is 25+ years old, so it does not represent current research.
  - D. It does not mention any students at all.
4. Aleena's STUDENT NOTE is a strong note. Which feature makes it strong?
  - A. It copies Source 1 word for word with no changes.
  - B. It paraphrases the source's facts in Aleena's own words, keeps the specific numbers (4,200 / 2.1), and names the source and year.
  - C. It only writes Aleena's opinion about walking.
  - D. It is shorter than the original sentence.
5. Imagine Aleena wrote a different note from Source 1 that said: *Active commuting (walking, biking) is linked to fewer absences. A 2023 study of 4,200 sixth graders found students who actively commuted three or more days per week missed about 2.1 fewer days per year.* But she did NOT write where the information came from. What is the PROBLEM?
  - A. The note is too short.
  - B. The note doesn't track the SOURCE, so if Aleena uses these facts later she will have no way to cite them - and using them without credit would be plagiarism.
  - C. The note uses too many numbers.
  - D. The note is missing the word *school*.
6. Which sentence is a QUOTATION from Source 1 (must use the source's EXACT words)?
  - A. According to Source 1, walking to school helps students.
  - B. Source 1 says active commuting raises energy levels.
  - C. As Source 1 puts it, 'students who actively commuted at least three days a week missed an average of 2.1 fewer school days per year.'
  - D. Source 1 mostly talks about walking and biking.



7. Aleena wants to use the IDEA from Source 1 but writes it in her own words. Does she still need to cite Source 1?

- A. No - paraphrasing means she changed the words, so credit is not needed.
- B. No - sixth graders are not expected to cite sources.
- C. Yes - the IDEA still came from someone else's work, so the source must be cited even when paraphrased.
- D. Yes, but only if Source 1 is a book.

8. Which is the BEST CITATION format for using Source 1 in a Grade 6 report?

- A. (some article online)
- B. (I read it somewhere reliable)
- C. (Children's-Health Journal, 2024)
- D. Citation is not needed for facts.

9. Write a one-sentence PARAPHRASE of Source 1's main finding in your OWN words. End your sentence with a Grade 6 citation in the form (Source, year).

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10. Now write a one-sentence note for a researcher comparing Source 1 and Source 2. Your sentence must (a) name which source is MORE CREDIBLE and (b) give ONE specific reason why.

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# Answer Keys

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Explanations	
<b>1. A</b>	A names every strong credibility marker: peer-reviewed, recent, in a topic-specific journal. B is an ad with a sales motive (commercial bias). C is one person's opinion AND outdated (1998). D ignores the real differences in credibility.
<b>2. B</b>	Commercial sources have a built-in reason to support claims that help sales - that is BIAS, the key credibility concern. A is irrelevant. C is the opposite of a problem. D is false (the source uses <i>studies</i> ).
<b>3. C</b>	Opinion writing reflects one person's view, not research, and 1998 data is dated for a current report. C names both flaws. A overgeneralizes about newspapers. B is irrelevant. D is false - the column is about kids.
<b>4. B</b>	B names what strong notes do: faithful paraphrase + key data preserved + source identified for later citation. A would be plagiarism. C wouldn't capture the source. D oversimplifies (shortness alone doesn't make a note strong).
<b>5. B</b>	Notes must include the source so the writer can cite it later and avoid plagiarism. B names that exact failure. A and D are irrelevant. C is false - numbers are what make the note useful.
<b>6. C</b>	A quotation uses the source's EXACT words inside quotation marks. C does. A, B, and D paraphrase the source rather than quoting it, so they are not quotations.
<b>7. C</b>	Even a complete rewording must cite the source - the IDEA is the source's, and using it without credit is plagiarism. A names the most common student misconception. B is false. D is false.
<b>8. C</b>	C names the publication and the year - exactly what a Grade 6 citation should include so a reader could find the source. A and B are too vague to follow up on. D is false - facts from sources still need citation.
<b>9.</b>	<p><b>Answer:</b> Examples: (1) Sixth graders who walk or bike to school at least three times a week miss about 2.1 fewer days of school each year than students who travel by car (Children's-Health Journal, 2024). (2) Researchers found that active commuting on three or more days a week was linked to about two fewer absences per year for sixth graders (Children's-Health Journal, 2024).</p> <p>Accept any single sentence that (a) keeps the meaning of Source 1's finding, (b) uses substantially different wording (not copied), and (c) ends with a citation that names the source and year. NOT acceptable: copying the source word for word, distorting the finding, dropping the numbers, or leaving off the citation.</p>



10. **Answer:** Examples: (1) Source 1 is more credible because it is a peer-reviewed 2024 journal article reporting a study of 4,200 students, while Source 2 is an advertising blog with a commercial reason to make its product look good. (2) Source 1 is more credible than Source 2 because Source 1 reports a named, recent study while Source 2 is a sneaker ad whose main goal is to sell shoes.  
Accept any single sentence that (a) names Source 1 (or the journal) as MORE credible AND (b) gives a SPECIFIC, accurate credibility reason (peer review, study with sample size, named publisher, vs. commercial bias of an ad). NOT acceptable: a sentence that calls Source 2 more credible, a vague reason ('it sounds better'), or a sentence that does not name a specific credibility marker.



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