Short Research Projects: Question and Refocus

Name: _____	Date: _____	Score: _____ / 10

Quick Review

A Grade 7 short research project (1) begins with a FOCUSED, OPEN question, (2) uses several SOURCES, (3) GENERATES additional related questions as the researcher learns more, and (4) REFOCUSES the original question when the evidence points to a different angle. Generating follow-up questions is a sign of a researcher who is reading deeply, not getting lost.

PART 1 — READ

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

Three research situations

SITUATION A - Maya is starting a one-week research project. Her teacher assigned the broad topic 'sleep.' Maya must NARROW it into a focused, researchable question for Grade 7 work.

SITUATION B - Diego has the research question 'What factors most affect honeybee colony health in U.S. backyard hives?' He is partway through reading three sources and needs to GENERATE additional related questions to deepen the project.

SITUATION C - Ada has been researching the question 'How does walking to school affect Grade 7 students' mood?' She finds that most of her strongest evidence is actually about ATTENTION IN MORNING CLASSES, not mood. She must decide whether to REFOCUS her question.

PART 2 — PRACTICE

Read each research situation and choose the BEST option.

1. Which research question is BEST for Maya's one-week Grade 7 project?

A. Is sleep real?

B. Everything there is to know about sleep.

C. How does daily smartphone use after 9 p.m. affect the total nightly sleep of Grade 7 students in suburban U.S. school districts?

D. What is the longest a person has ever stayed awake?

2. Maya also considered *Is sleep important?* Why is this NOT a strong research question for a Grade 7 project?

A. The question is missing the word *important*.

B. The question is too BROAD and the answer is obvious - no real research is needed.

C. The question is too long.

D. The question uses too many vowels.

3. Diego is reading his three sources and wants to GENERATE additional questions to deepen the project. Which is the BEST follow-up question?

A. What is the largest beehive in the world?

B. Are bees real?

C. How does the local availability of wildflower meadows within one mile of a backyard hive affect that colony's survival from spring to fall?

D. Do bees like the color yellow?

4. Diego has noticed a pattern: every credible source says PARASITIC MITES are the single largest threat to U.S. backyard hives. What is the BEST way to USE this pattern in his project?

A. Ignore the pattern and keep researching unrelated topics.

B. Throw out all of his notes and start a new project from scratch.

C. GENERATE a follow-up question specifically about mites - for example, *How do backyard beekeepers monitor and treat parasitic mite infestations during the active season?* - and let it sharpen his original question.

D. Pretend the pattern doesn't exist because it wasn't in his first plan.

5. Ada has been researching how walking to school affects MOOD, but her strongest evidence is about ATTENTION IN MORNING CLASSES. What is the BEST decision?

A. Force the attention evidence into a mood paper by relabeling everything mood, even though that distorts the sources.

B. Throw out all the research and start over on a brand-new topic.

C. REFOCUS the research question to match what the sources actually show - for example, *How does walking to school affect Grade 7 students' attention during morning classes?* - and use the strong evidence to support it.

D. Add invented mood data that fits the original question.

6. After refocusing, which is the BEST way for Ada to KEEP the value of her original research?

A. Delete every note she took on mood and pretend she never read those sources.

B. Save the mood-related notes as POSSIBLE FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS for a future project - and cite any genuinely on-topic findings briefly in the refocused paper.

C. Submit the original mood paper anyway, even though it isn't supported by the sources she has.

D. Lie about which question she started with.

7. Maya narrows her topic to *How does daily smartphone use after 9 p.m. affect the total nightly sleep of Grade 7 students?* Which is the BEST FIRST STEP after writing the question?

A. Write the entire report from memory before reading anything.

B. Postpone all research until the night before the project is due.

C. Skim three or four credible sources to see what they cover, then start a notes page that includes the source for each note.

D. Switch to a brand-new topic in case this one doesn't work out.

8. Diego wants to make sure his project uses MULTIPLE sources, not just one. Why does Grade 7 research expect SEVERAL sources rather than ONE?

A. More sources are required by law for school projects.

B. Several sources let a researcher CROSS-CHECK facts, find points where credible experts disagree, and build a stronger, more balanced explanation than any single source can.

C. Several sources mean the writer can copy from each one without anyone noticing.

D. Several sources make the paper exactly that many times longer.

9. Maya has her question, and she begins reading source 1. She also wants to GENERATE follow-up questions she might explore later. Which is the BEST follow-up question?

A. What's the largest phone ever made?

B. Are phones real?

C. How does the type of screen activity (video versus reading versus social media) affect total nightly sleep in Grade 7 students?

D. Do phones taste good?

10. Halfway through her project, Ada is unsure if she should refocus. Which sign MOST strongly suggests REFOCUSING is the right call?

A. She has read only one short article that mentions her original question even briefly.

B. She found one quote she really likes but doesn't fully understand.

C. Her credible sources consistently and clearly point at a DIFFERENT factor than the one in her original question, so the strongest evidence she has does not actually support her current wording.

D. She has been working on the project for a few days and is starting to feel tired.

Answer Keys

1	A	B	**C**	D	6	A	**B**	C	D
2	A	**B**	C	D	7	A	B	**C**	D
3	A	B	**C**	D	8	A	**B**	C	D
4	A	B	**C**	D	9	A	B	**C**	D
5	A	B	**C**	D	10	A	B	**C**	D

Explanations

1. C	C is FOCUSED (one variable, one age group, one region), OPEN (requires real research, not yes/no), and realistic for one week. A is yes/no answerable. B is a topic, not a question. D has a single-fact answer.
2. B	*Is sleep important?* has an obvious yes answer; no real research is needed. B names that problem. A is false (the word IS there). C is false (it's short). D is irrelevant.
3. C	C is a focused, evidence-friendly question that DEEPENS Diego's original research (factors affecting backyard hive health) by zooming in on one specific factor (wildflower meadows within one mile). A is trivia. B is yes/no obvious. D is a yes/no question with no clear research path.
4. C	C names the real research move: when one factor keeps appearing as decisive, a careful researcher generates a sharper follow-up question that focuses the project on that factor. A wastes the insight. B is overcorrection. D is intellectually dishonest.
5. C	C names the Grade 7 move: when evidence points to a different angle, REFOCUS the question rather than distort the sources. A is dishonest. B wastes weeks of work. D fabricates data.
6. B	B turns leftover work into NEW research questions - exactly what Grade 7 standards expect (generate additional questions for further investigation). A wastes useful starting material. C submits a paper the sources don't support. D is dishonest.
7. C	C is the real next step: gather a small set of credible sources, skim for relevance, and start organizing notes WITH source tracking from the very beginning. A skips research. B is a planning failure. D abandons useful work.
8. B	B names the real reason: cross-checking and capturing different angles are core research practices. A is false. C is plagiarism, the opposite of research. D confuses sources with length.
9. C	C deepens Maya's main question by zooming in on a single variable (activity type) that none of her original wording captured - a true Grade 7 follow-up move. A is trivia. B is yes/no obvious. D is irrelevant.
10. C	C names the real signal: when the credible evidence consistently points at a different factor, the question itself is the problem. A is a sign she needs MORE reading, not refocusing. B is a comprehension issue. D is fatigue, not a research signal.

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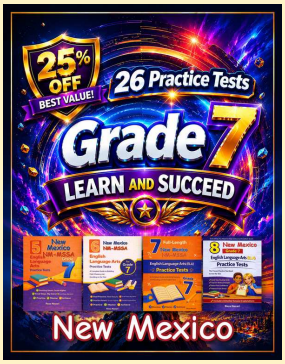

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