

ACTIVITY 2.6

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Evaluating Sources: How Credible Are They?

*pick up
the*

▶ PLAN

Materials: research sources/ Internet, two preselected websites for evaluation, highlighters, picture of or actual Coca Cola can

Suggested pacing: 1.5 50-minute class periods

▶ TEACH

1 Now that students have done some preliminary research, they need to understand how to evaluate the sources they are consulting.

2 First, read the introductory paragraph, and then guide students to begin to complete the graphic organizer by predicting or looking up the definition of each source evaluation criterion. Then have students take notes to define each criterion presented.

LEARNING STRATEGIES:

Predicting, Note-taking, Graphic Organizer

My Notes

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

Credibility comes from the word *credible*, which means “believable or trustworthy.”

Learning Targets

- Evaluate research sources for authority, accuracy, credibility, timeliness, and purpose/audience.
- Distinguish between primary and secondary sources.
- Evaluate a website’s content and identity to determine appropriate Internet sources for research.

Research Sources

After choosing a topic and writing research questions, the next step is to find sources of information. Sources might be books, magazines, documentary films, or online information. Not all sources are equal, however. Some are better than others. Learning how to tell the difference is a skill you need both for your academic success and your life.

Evaluating Sources

1. You can evaluate both print and online resources using five separate criteria, including authority, accuracy, **credibility**, timeliness, and purpose/audience. Use a dictionary or work with your classmates and teacher to complete each definition.

Source Criteria	Definition
1. Authority	Who is the author? What organization is behind this information? What are the qualifications of the author or organization to write about this topic?
2. Accuracy	Try to determine if the content of the source is fact, opinion, or propaganda. If you think the source is offering facts, are the sources for those facts clearly indicated?
3. Credibility	Is the information trustworthy? Does it show any biases for or against the topic?
4. Timeliness	How timely is the source? Is the source years out of date? Some information becomes dated when new research is available, but other older sources of information can be quite sound 50 or 100 years later.
5. Purpose/Audience	What is the purpose of the information? To whom is it directed?

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

Focus Standards:

W.7.8: Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

W.7.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

Additional Standards Addressed:

W.7.7; SL.7.2; SL.7.6; RI.7.1; RI.7.6

ACTIVITY 2.6 continued

16 Finally, have students use search terms to do online research for the research topic. They should choose one or two sites that look useful and then evaluate those sites using the graphic organizer provided.

ACTIVITY 2.6 continued

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Criteria	Question	Yes/No	Site 1	Site 2
Authority	1. Is it clear who is sponsoring the creation and maintenance of the page?	Yes No	Notes:	Notes:
	2. Is there information available describing the purpose of the sponsoring organization?	Yes No		
	3. Is there a way to verify the authority of the page's sponsor? For instance, is a phone number or address available to contact for more information?	Yes No		
	4. Is it clear who developed and wrote the material? Are his or her qualifications for writing on this topic clearly stated? Is there contact information for the author of the material?	Yes No		
Accuracy	1. Are the sources for factual information given so they can be verified?	Yes No		
	3. If information is presented in graphs or charts, is it labeled clearly?	Yes No		
	4. Does the information appear to have errors?	Yes No		
Credibility	1. Is the page and the information from a reliable source?	Yes No		
	2. Is it free of advertising?	Yes No		
	3. If there is advertising on the page, is it clearly separated from the informational content?	Yes No		
	4. Are there any signs of bias?	Yes No		
Timeliness	1. Do dates on the page indicate when the page was written or last revised?	Yes No		
	2. Are there any other indications that the material is updated frequently to ensure timely information?	Yes No		
	3. If the information is published in print in different editions, is it clear what edition the page is from?	Yes No		
Purpose/ Audience	1. Does the site indicate who the intended audience is?	Yes No		
	2. Is there any evidence of why the information is provided?	Yes No		

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