ACTIVITY 2.6

PLANNING

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

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 Is the source years out of date?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?

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

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
2. Look back at the two informational texts in this unit. For each text, write the title in the graphic organizer below. Then evaluate how well the texts meet each of the criteria. Check that you have correct definitions for each term.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text 1:</th>
<th>Text 2:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authority:</td>
<td>Authority:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accuracy:</td>
<td>Accuracy:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credibility:</td>
<td>Credibility:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeliness:</td>
<td>Timeliness:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose/Audience:</td>
<td>Purpose/Audience:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Do you think one of these sources is more credible or worthy of your trust than the other? Explain why.

**Preview**

In this part of the activity, you will read an online informational text and practice evaluating the text using the criteria you learned earlier in the activity.

**Setting a Purpose for Reading**
- As you read the text, underline phrases or sentences that say what the company does not do with regard to marketing to children.
- Circle unknown words and phrases. Try to determine the meaning of the words by using context clues, word parts, or a dictionary.

**ACTIVITY 2.6 continued**

3. Follow the directions to practice evaluating sources using the two informational texts already presented in the unit. Model for the class how to use the criteria to evaluate the credibility of the first text. Then ask pairs to do the same for the second text.

4. Read the Preview and the Setting a Purpose for Reading sections with your students.

5. **FIRST READ:** Based on the complexity of the passage and your knowledge of your students, you may choose to conduct the first reading in a variety of ways:
   - independent reading
   - paired reading
   - small-group reading
   - choral reading
   - read aloud

6. As students are reading, monitor their progress. Be sure they are engaged with the text and annotating the text for statements about what the company does not do. Evaluate whether the selected reading mode is effective.

7. Based on the observations you made during the first reading, you may want to adjust your reading mode. For example, you may decide for the second reading to read aloud certain complex passages, or you may group students differently.
One important aspect of the Mars Marketing Code is our commitment not to direct advertisements to children under 12 years of age. In 2007, we were the first food company to announce a global commitment to stop advertising food, snack and confectionery products to children under 12.

Specifically, we do not buy advertising time or space if more than a quarter of the audience is likely to be under 12 and we do not advertise on websites aimed at those under 13. Visitors to most of our web pages have to enter their birth date before downloading branded wallpapers or screensavers or participating in activities. Our advertisements and promotions never depict unaccompanied children under 12 eating snack foods, nor do we use them as spokespersons for our brands.

We continue to use established brand characters such as the M&M’S® Characters, but will refrain from creating new characters with child appeal for chocolate, gum and confections. The actions and speech of the M&M’S® Characters are intended for an audience over 12 years of age, and we continue to emphasize their mature personalities and adult characteristics.

Our Marketing Code also states that Mars does not place vending machines offering our snack food products in primary schools and does not offer Mars-branded educational materials or sponsor sporting events at primary schools, except in connection with established educational or public service messaging programs on responsible gum disposal and oral health care, or upon the request of schools.

We are a member of the International Food and Beverage Alliance (IFBA) industry coalition, which commits member companies to upholding shared marketing standards. The IFBA monitors its members’ performance, and a third party audits a sample of ten countries with a global spread.

In addition to our global Marketing Code, we have signed country-specific marketing pledges around the world.

Second Read
- Reread the informational text to answer these text-dependent questions.
- Write any additional questions you have about the text in your Reader/Writer Notebook.
1. **Key Ideas and Details:** The first paragraph states that Mars is committed to not marketing to children. How does it support this statement? Why might the company want readers to know about its commitment?

   The statement is supported by the sentence, “In 2007, we were the first food company to announce a global commitment to stop advertising food, snack and confectionery products to children under 12.” This gives readers a positive idea of the company as an industry leader that looks out for the welfare of children.

2. **Key Ideas and Details:** How does the phrase “or upon the request of schools” affect the claim that the company does not sponsor sporting events at primary schools?

   It subtly reveals a major exception to the claim.

3. **Craft and Structure:** What is the likely purpose for including the paragraph about being “a member of the International Food and Beverage Alliance”?

   The paragraph aims to increase the credibility of the company by saying it is monitored by a large, external organization.

**Working from the Text**

4. Use the graphic organizer below to further analyze the text. Make inferences — conclusions based on details in the text — and cite specific evidence to support your inferences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Mars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who is the author? Where is this text published?</td>
<td>Inference:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>Inference:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is the intended audience?</td>
<td>Evidence:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Format</td>
<td>Inference:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does the format match the intended audience?</td>
<td>Evidence:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Inference:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the purpose of this text? What is the point of view of the company regarding marketing to youth?</td>
<td>Evidence:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. How would you rate this text for the five criteria for evaluating sources? Explain your reasoning.

   3. **Craft and Structure (RI.7.6)** What is the purpose for including the paragraph about being “a member of the International Food and Beverage Alliance”? How do you know? What impression do you get from knowing that Mars is part of an international alliance? Does it make the company seem more or less honest and ethical?
**Evaluating Sources: How Credible Are They?**

**Primary and Secondary Sources**
When choosing credible research sources, you will find primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are original documents; they are often used in historical research. For example, if you are researching the era of the Civil War, you might use the primary resource of Lincoln’s “Gettysburg Address.” You might find that speech in a secondary source written about the Civil War or on the Internet.

6. Look at the texts you have read so far in the unit. Are they primary or secondary sources? How do you know?

Both are secondary sources since both are based on polls conducted by their respective companies (Harris Interactive poll and Center for the American Dream poll). The polls would be primary sources. The online text, written by the Mars company itself, is a primary source.

**Evaluating Online Resources**
Anyone can publish writing on the Internet. This openness is both one of the strengths and one of the weaknesses of the Internet. In order to be an effective researcher, you must be aware of the differences in quality that exist among websites.

A good place to start evaluating a website’s authority is by looking at its domain suffix. The domain name is the Web address, or Internet identity. The domain suffix, the three letters that follow the dot, is the category in which that website falls. The most commonly used domain suffixes are described below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain Suffix</th>
<th>Definition/Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.com</td>
<td>Stands for “commercial.” Usually, websites with this suffix intend to make some sort of profit from their Internet services. Typically these are the websites that sell goods or services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.org</td>
<td>Stands for “organization.” Primarily used by not-for-profit groups such as charities and professional organizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.net</td>
<td>Stands for “network.” Used by Internet service providers or web-hosting companies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.edu</td>
<td>Stands for “education.” Used by colleges, universities, educational organizations, or other institutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.gov</td>
<td>Stands for “government.” Used by federal, state, and local government sites.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. Which of the domain suffixes would lead you to expect that the information was more geared to selling something than giving information?

8. Visit the list of the sites provided by your teacher. Choose two that you want to investigate further in order to practice evaluating online sources. As you surf through the site, use the graphic organizer on the next page to help you decide whether the website provides reliable information without bias.
   - Circle “yes” or “no” for each question. You want to be able to answer “yes” to as many of the questions as possible to consider the source reliable and credible.
   - If you are able to answer “yes” to the question, answer the question by taking notes about the site.

   Site 1 _______________________________________
   Site 2 _______________________________________

9. Is one of the sites you explored more credible (trustworthy) than the other? Why?

**Searching for Sources**

When using the Internet for research, your first step might be to use a search engine to find sources. Search engines work from a type of index. When you enter a search term that is in the index, the search engine finds websites that also use that word or phrase.

Depending on your search term, a search might return hundreds, thousands, or even millions of possible sites. For example, if you enter the search term “Civil War,” you will get pages and pages of sites because the term is so broad. If you are just looking for the battle at Antietam, narrowing your search to that word would give you better results.

10. How might you choose good sites from your search?

11. To research the effect of marketing and advertising to young people, what search terms might you use?

12. Using your search term(s), find information on the topic of marketing and advertising aimed at young people. Choose one or two sites to explore further. Record information about the sites (URL, type of information provided, and your comments on the site or the information).

**TEACHER TO TEACHER**

It is important to evaluate the websites ahead of time so you are aware of the content and any obstacles students may run into. Pairs or triads work best for grouping in this activity. It is difficult for groups with more than three members to share a computer.

13. Select two websites that address the topic of consumerism and marketing to youth. Try to select one that is reliable and one that is less reliable. If you need help with this step, refer to your school media specialist. If computers are not readily available, you may wish to print out the website information and distribute it to the class. If Internet access is available, send each group to a computer to find each site and evaluate it against the criteria on the graphic organizer. Using the criteria and questions, instruct student groups to complete the activity by thinking “yes” or “no” and noting their responses.

14. Ask each group to share its site evaluations with other groups.

15. Have students read the Searching for Sources information, and then answer the questions relating to search terms. Have students share their ideas for search terms with the class and create a class list of viable terms.
### Evaluating Sources: How Credible Are They?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes/No</th>
<th>Site 1</th>
<th>Site 2</th>
<th>Notes:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Authority</strong></td>
<td>1. Is it clear who is sponsoring the creation and maintenance of the page?</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Notes:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Is there information available describing the purpose of the sponsoring organization?</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Notes:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>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?</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Notes:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>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?</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Notes:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accuracy</strong></td>
<td>1. Are the sources for factual information given so they can be verified?</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Notes:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. If information is presented in graphs or charts, is it labeled clearly?</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Notes:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Does the information appear to have errors?</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Notes:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Credibility</strong></td>
<td>1. Is the page and the information from a reliable source?</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Notes:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Is it free of advertising?</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Notes:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. If there is advertising on the page, is it clearly separated from the informational content?</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Notes:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Are there any signs of bias?</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Notes:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Timeliness</strong></td>
<td>1. Do dates on the page indicate when the page was written or last revised?</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Notes:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Are there any other indications that the material is updated frequently to ensure timely information?</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Notes:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. If the information is published in print in different editions, is it clear what edition the page is from?</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Notes:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose/Audience</strong></td>
<td>1. Does the site indicate who the intended audience is?</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Notes:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Is there any evidence of why the information is provided?</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Notes:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Language and Writer's Craft: Revising for Precise Language and Formal Style

Most of your expository writing will be for an academic audience. For this audience, you should use precise language and a formal writing style.

**Precise language.** Your choice of words (diction) should include the academic vocabulary and literary terms that you are learning, as they apply to the topic. For example:

Original: The advertisement used a celebrity to help sell its product.

Revised: The advertisement used the advertising technique of a testimonial to sell its product by using the professional athlete Derek Jeter.

Another way to be precise is to provide detailed information about a text or resource you are citing.

Original: In the news story it says that . . .

Revised: In the news story from the *New York Times* on Sunday, March 18, the author claims that . . .

**Formal language.** Formal language avoids slang, and it generally does not use contractions. Most slang that you might use in everyday language is too casual for academic writing. Words or phrases you use with your peers may not be understood by different audiences or appropriate for an academic topic.

Original: I'm a teenager, and, like, most of us look at famous people as cool and in the know.

Revised: Teenagers generally believe that famous people are models for their own thoughts and behavior.

Check Your Understanding

**WRITING to SOURCES** Expository Writing Prompt: Using information from one of your searches, write a paragraph summarizing the information you found about marketing to young people. Be sure to:

- Introduce your topic clearly.
- Use concrete details, examples, and quotations to develop your topic.
- Use formal language and transitions that create coherence.

**ASSESS**
Evaluate students’ responses to the writing prompt to ensure that they are able to introduce a topic clearly; to include relevant details and precise information for the topic; and to use formal, academic language correctly. Also check for correct spelling and punctuation to get students into the habit of self-editing for these conventions.

**ADAPT**
Students will need to evaluate the quality of the sources in their research for both the expository essay (EA1) and the argumentative essay (EA2). You might consider replicating the graphic organizers for students to use as support when they get to the EAs. As students proceed through the unit (both EAs), continually bring up the question of credibility. Consider asking a student to create a poster for the classroom to summarize the criteria. Display it or put the criteria on the Word Wall so students are reminded that this is an important part of the research process.