

# RELIABLE SOURCES

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## GRADE LEVEL

4-6

## ESTIMATED TIME

60 mins



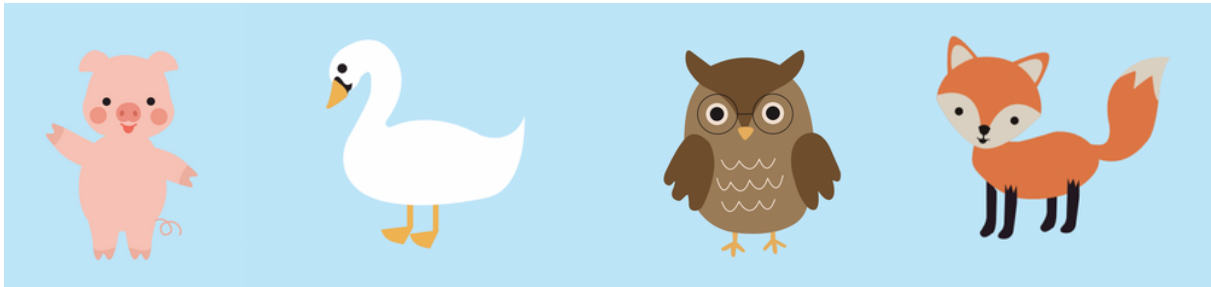
## OVERVIEW

The purpose of this lesson plan is to teach students the various components that make up a reliable source. By questioning the validity of their sources, students will develop media literacy skills. Lastly, students have the opportunity to test their knowledge with a worksheet that prompts them to identify which sources are reliable and which sources are unreliable.

## RESOURCES AND PREPARATION

### Materials:

- Computer and projector
- Reliable Sources worksheet for each student (attached)



## OBJECTIVES

- Develop a baseline knowledge of how reliable sources typically present themselves
- Question the validity of various sources that students are subjected to in online spaces
- Students will be able to identify reliable versus unreliable sources

## LESSON PROCEDURE

### Part 1: Introduction to Reliable Sources

1. Write the following guiding questions on the board and tell students to ask themselves these questions every time they come across a source:
  - Who wrote the article? Are they qualified to speak on the matter?
  - Is it published by a well-known platform?
  - Are there any spelling/grammar mistakes?
2. Ask the class to name some sources they commonly use and if the sources are or are not reliable.
  - Correct any wrong answers and explain why
3. Write the following 6 on the board:
  - Wikipedia
  - Social media (Twitter, Instagram, TikTok)
  - Blog posts (Quora, Reddit)
  - Primary Sources (Photographs, Journals)
  - Established news sources (NBC, NY Times)
  - Scientific studies
4. Inform the class that the 6 categories on the board are a collection of unreliable and reliable places to get information.
5. Ask the class to identify which sources are reliable, which are unreliable, and which may be reliable but need to be fact-checked

## LESSON PROCEDURE

### Part 2: Example of Finding Reliable Information

1. Ask the class to come up with a celebrity or famous person and then share your screen with the class.
2. Start with Wikipedia and search the celebrity on the website. Ask the class if they think it is an unreliable or reliable place to get information.
  - Tell the class that this source can be edited by anyone, at any time. Wikipedia pages sometimes have sources at the bottom making it a good place to find other sources on a given topic, but the information seen on the page itself is not a reliable source.
3. Next, find information about the celebrity on social media and repeat the question.
  - Inform them that similar to Wikipedia, anybody can post virtually anything on social media. You do not have to be an expert to post on the internet, so information from friends or family should be taken with a grain of salt.
4. Find a blog post about the celebrity and scroll through it. Repeat the question.
  - Tell the class that anyone can create a website and post whatever they want. It is best to avoid using blog posts as a source of information.

## LESSON PROCEDURE

9. Find a primary source about the celebrity (ex: the celebrity's social media, a quote or photo from them) and repeat the question.

- Tell the class that these are the most reliable sources available because they are firsthand accounts and cannot be misinterpreted or skewed by secondary sources. However, if they are giving an opinion, don't assume that what they are saying is a fact.

10. Next, show an article from a well-established news source about the celebrity. Repeat the question.

- List reliable news sources for the class such as The Washington Post, The New York Times, NPR, and BBC.
- Introduce Media Bias: Some sources have liberal biases whereas others have conservative biases. It is important to recognize media biases and fact vs. opinion within the article.

11. Lastly, show a scientific and peer-reviewed study about the celebrity.

- This may be harder to find so explain how to find the source in general and why it is reliable.

## **Part 3: Reliable Sources Worksheet**

1. Hand out the attached worksheet to each student and have students complete it individually or in a group
2. Once students are finished, go over the answers as a class

Conclude the lesson by asking if anyone has any questions about reliable and unreliable sources, and discuss as a class.

## **STUDENT ASSESSMENT/REFLECTIONS**

### **Reflection: Free-Write**

Set a timer for 5 minutes and ask students to free-write (ungraded) answering one or more of the following questions:

1. How can you tell if a source is reliable?
2. What are some examples of reliable sources?  
Examples of unreliable sources?
3. What is something new you learned today or something you are still confused about?

Read through the students' responses to gauge their comprehension and address any questions they may still have.