



Finding Reliable Sources: Lesson Plan

Topic	
A reliable source provides a thorough, well-reasoned theory, argument, or discussion, based on strong evidence. Some steps you can take to find trustworthy sources include evaluating the author’s bias, looking for a reputable history of published work, and checking multiple sources before deciding if the information is trustworthy.	
Possible subjects/classes	Time needed
Political Science, US History, Media Communications, Social Studies	30-45 minutes
Video link:	
https://academy4sc.org/topic/finding-reliable-sources-no-more-bs-bad-sources/	
Objective: <i>What will students know/be able to do at the end of class?</i>	
Students will be able to... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the differences between a primary and secondary source. • Describe strong steps to take to ensure they are using a reliable source. • Explain why it is worth the effort to find a reliable source. 	
Key Concepts & Vocabulary	
Implicit Bias	
Materials Needed	
Computers, Worksheet, Pen and Paper/ Poster board	
Before you watch	
Quick Write: Have students independently write down what they would check for to determine whether or not a certain source was reliable for a research paper.	



Encourage them to also then write about what makes a friend/family member a trustworthy source of information in their life.

While you watch

1. What is the difference between a primary and secondary source?
2. What are two additional things to consider when determining if a source from a larger publishing organization is reliable?
3. How would you define implicit bias?
4. Why should you be especially wary of statistics and percentages quoted in a source?

After you watch/discussion questions

1. Do you think the increase of available information online has made making accurate and well-informed decisions easier or more difficult? Why or why not?
2. What are examples of unreliable sources of information you have come across in your own life?
3. What resources do you have available to ensure you are finding reliable sources?

Activity Ideas

- Place a variety of poster boards/ paper along the walls. Have a different source listed on each station. Have students move around the room, ranking the different sources based on bias, accuracy, and background. Then, students should rate each source's overall reliability. Encourage students to also list any important context they accounted for when determining reliability. After about 15 minutes of surveying the sources, bring students back together as a class. Have students go stand by the source they found to be most reliable. Each group will have a period of time to debate / share why they think their source is most reliable.
- Break students up into small groups. Assign each group a source, making sure some groups get a reliable source and others get unreliable sources. Give each group about 10 minutes to evaluate their source and come up with a short presentation designed to convince the class of the point of



view presented in their source. Other groups are then free to ask follow up questions of the presenting groups. The goal is, as a class, to decide if each presenting group is sharing a reliable source and is a trustworthy source of information or not.

- Have students spend about 10 minutes writing individually about someone in their life they view as a reliable source of information for a given topic. What is the topic this individual is a reliable source on? What proves they are reliable? After the initial writing, have the students pair with a partner to continue their reflection by comparing and contrasting how they can look for these same qualities when evaluating reliable sources in their academic life. What is easier about evaluating reliability with the internet? What is more challenging? After 10 minutes of partner discussion, have the class come together and each partner pair share one similarity and difference they found when determining reliable sources in their personal and academic lives.

Sources/places to learn more

1. UGA. "GALILEO@UGA Subject Guides: Finding Reliable Sources: What Is A Reliable Source?". *Guides.Libs.Uga.Edu*, 2021.
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<https://www.stevenson.edu/online/about-us/news/how-to-identify-reliable-information>.
3. UNESCO. "Media And Information Literacy". *UNESCO*, 2021.
<https://en.unesco.org/themes/media-and-information-literacy>.
4. Pacific Staff, Fresno. "Why Today's Students Need Media Literacy More Than Ever". *Fresno Pacific University*, 2021.
<https://ce.fresno.edu/news/why-todays-students-need-media-literacy-more-than-ever#:~:text=The%20benefits%20of%20media%20literacy,foster%20critical%20thinking%20in%20students>.
5. UTEP Connect. "4 Ways To Differentiate A Good Source From A Bad Source". *Utep.Edu*, 2021.



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<https://www.utep.edu/extendeduniversity/utepconnect/blog/march-2017/4-ways-to-differentiate-a-good-source-from-a-bad-source.html>.