

## Evaluating Sources

**WebQuest Description:** Identify reliable sources for a research-based project by utilizing Wikipedia and other Internet search engines.

**Grade Level:** 9-12

**Curriculum:** English / Language Arts

**Keywords:** english, research, sources, reliable, writing, paper, wikipedia, lesson, CA4, Bramlett

**Published On:** 2010-12-09 13:20:31

**Last Modified:** 2010-12-16 11:37:20

**WebQuest URL:** <http://zunal.com/webquest.php?w=82179>

### Introduction

Wikipedia falls under the category of reference, but also contains no systematic way of checking its facts for accuracy. It is edited by common, everyday people, which makes it an unreliable source. However, Wikipedia is still useful because it requires its editors to follow a strict set of guidelines for citing its sources. (See resource "Wikipedia: Identifying reliable sources".) These citations are helpful because they reference areas of information that someone may or may not have been aware of. Think of Wikipedia as a compilation of sources rather than a source itself. Whether you are a teacher utilizing this WebQuest or simply looking it over, please provide a review so I can make adequate changes to maximize the efficacy of this WebQuest.

### Tasks

Today we are going to review the types of sources and what criteria should be met in order to establish a source as either reliable or unreliable. Using computer skills such as navigating the Internet and using search engines, you will determine whether specific examples are reliable or unreliable for a research-based project. For the final activity, you will explore a topic of your own, complete a list of 8 reliable sources, and list the criteria that each meets in order for them to be considered reliable.

### Process

1. Please download, open, and/or print the Identifying Reliable Sources handout. It outlines the the review of the types of sources and contains the questions for the activity.
2. Review the handout. For help, I have listed the following resources below:  
a) Link: "Critically Analyzing Information Sources, Cornell University"  
b) Link: "Evaluating Internet Research Sources, VirtualSalt"  
c) Video: "Advanced Research - Sources, iLearningServices"  
d) Video: "Evaluating Research Sources, Virginia International University"
3. At the bottom of the handout are your next instructions. For the following sources, determine whether each source is reliable. Mark either Yes or No on the line provided. The topic is a poet, Langston Hughes. Using the Internet and library resources, ask yourself "Does this site contain information I can use to write about Langston Hughes?" and "Is this information reliable?"
4. Look over your lists and finalize your answers. Questions to keep in mind:  
"What makes seemingly reliable sources unreliable?"  
"Was the list difficult?"  
"What problems did you run into?"
5. All of these examples came from the Langston Hughes Wikipedia page (resource number 6). You can find most of these sources on the Wikipedia page under "References" or "External Links." Wikipedia is helpful because it lists possible sources that may otherwise be hard to find. Do you see any other helpful links or sources?
6. Next, download, open, and/or print off the Source List graphic organizer provided below. Your task is to choose a topic and conduct an Internet search using Google first to list 5 possible sources.
7. Review your list again. It may be helpful to trade worksheets with someone else and have them review your choices.
8. Next, search through Wikipedia to add at least 3 more reliable sources to your list. Remember, Wikipedia is not a source itself. It is a useful tool that helps us find possible sources.
9. Page 2 of the graphic organizer asks you to briefly explain why each of these sources is reliable. Using notes or referring back to the resources listed in Step 2, you should have no problems listing at least a few reasons for each source.

### Evaluation

After you have completed the graphic organizer, your evaluation will be based on 3 criteria.

1. Providing a total of at least 8 sources on the graphic organizer.
2. Quality of the sources on your graphic organizer.
3. The explanation/criteria of why each source is reliable at the end of the graphic organizer.

The grade and evaluation is based off of individual performance.

Category and Score					Score

Category and Score					Score
				Total Score	

## Conclusion

By completing this WebQuest, you now have a list of sources you can use for a research project. You should be able to use Wikipedia effectively and be able to determine whether a source is reliable or unreliable.

## Teacher Page

This lesson was created as the CA4 for the ED219 course at Millikin University, Fall 2010. The goal was to incorporate learned technology with differentiated learning, learning styles, and engaged learning. Students will use this Web Quest to review the types of sources available for a research-based project. They will develop an understanding of what is considered a reliable or unreliable source and how Wikipedia can be used to gather information but not be used as a source. At the completion of the project, students will demonstrate their ability to search for possible sources and explain why they are reliable. The completed list could be used to further their research and start planning a paper or project.

**Learners:** This lesson has been developed for grades 9-12 English Language Arts in Illinois. **Standards:** Illinois English Language Arts, Goal 5, Research 5.B.4a Choose and evaluate primary and secondary sources (print and nonprint) for a variety of purposes. Formulate advanced search strategies, demonstrating an understanding of the strengths and limitations of the Internet, and evaluate the quality and appropriate use of Internet resources.

**Summary of Objectives**

1. List the different types of sources and define what the standards are for a "reliable" source.
2. Explain why a specific source is reliable.
3. Evaluate a list of sources to determine whether they can be considered reliable.
4. Distinguish the difference between a reliable and an unreliable source.
5. Revise a list of sources to create a larger selection.
6. Defend a final list of source and explain why they are reliable.

This WebQuest can be completed independently or as pre-work for a research project. It works great either to teach how good sources are determined, as a refresher for students who wish to review, or to kick off a new project.

**When writing this WebQuest and Lesson Plan (resource below,) I took into consideration several methods of instruction. Guiding examples and self-paced learning were key to the development of this WebQuest. This WebQuest relies heavily on Internet connectivity, both for the content being covered and instructional tools.**

### Standards

### Credits

### Other