

Expert Group Two: Evaluating the Reliability of Sources

Presentation: Lesson Content

When Evaluating the reliability of sources you need to consider the following things:

1. What is the source of the information being considered?
2. Below is a list the factors that are relevant to the reliability of each source type:

- **Publication**

1. Date - is the information current, or does it need to be current?
2. Reputation of publication - is the source well known and reputable?
3. Kind of publication - is it a scientific report, eyewitness account, a work of fiction?

- **Author or Speaker**

1. Qualifications - is he an expert in his field?
2. Bias - is he one-sided in his point-of-view?
3. Values - what does the author value in regards to the topic?
4. Chance for personal gain - does the author stand to benefit from his position?

- **Consistency of Information**

Confirmation or corroboration - can anyone else make the same claims?

- **Means of Obtaining the Information**

1. Witness or researcher - was the author or speaker a first-hand witness to the information or did he gather it from some other source?
2. Equipment - what kind of equipment was used to record information?

Practice:

Work together and use these questions to evaluate each of the sources we have been using in class :

- ✓ Where did this information come from?
- ✓ How could the source know?
- ✓ Is the source reliable?
- ✓ What biases does the source have?
- ✓ What does the source stand to gain or lose?
- ✓ Did the source leave out any relevant evidence?
- ✓ How does that missing evidence affect any conclusion about the issue?

List any source(s) you feel is not reliable: _____

All of the sources are reliable: _____