

Ohio Standards Connections

Research

Benchmark B

Locate and summarize important information from multiple sources.

(Grades 5 - 7)

Indicator 3

Identify and explain the importance of validity in sources, including publication date, coverage, language, points of view and describe primary and secondary sources.

(Grade 7)

Lesson Summary:

Students will learn to determine the validity of different resources. Some areas to consider will be publication date, coverage, language, point of view and primary versus secondary sources.

Estimated Duration: 90 minutes broken into instructional sessions.

Commentary:

Determining whether or not a resource is valid can be one of the most difficult things seventh graders learn to do. They tend to accept that which seems to have been written by an authority, often thinking of anything in print or on the Internet as valid. The focus of this lesson is to address the specific points students can use to help determine validity. This lesson was designed for grade seven, but can also be adapted for grades above and below grade seven.

Pre-Assessment:

Provide students with one or two sources of information along with a checklist (Blackline Master 1). Read the information to the students as they follow along, and then instruct them to complete the checklist for validity.

Scoring Guidelines:

The pre-assessment activity should serve as a basis for discussion and reveal students' experience with questioning what they read. You'll be able to determine how much time to spend on this activity and what additional help or support will be necessary for individual students.

Post-Assessment:

Students identify the sources for their own research and apply the checklist to verify the validity of the sources.

Scoring Guidelines:

Review the checklists to be sure students understand the concept. If they are having difficulty with some components of the checklist, give them additional support by working through a class checklist on the overhead projector. Modeling the process is often helpful for those students who need to see what they should be doing.

Instructional Procedures:

1. Discuss with students whether or not they can believe everything they read. Share two editorials written about the same topic that take different positions. Ask students which one is correct. Talk about how two writers can use the same facts but have different opinions and reach different conclusions.
2. Share the resource used in the pre-assessment with the students. Talk to them about all the aspects of a resource that should be considered in determining its validity. Pass out guidelines for determining validity (Blackline Master 2). Ask students to re-examine the resource in light of the guidelines provided.

3. Take time to address the guidelines as they may apply to the resource being examined.
4. Divide students into groups of two to four. Provide each group with a magazine or newspaper article to preview for validity. Ask students to determine the validity of the article. Provide ample time for the group discussion.
5. Have groups share their discoveries with the rest of the class. Encourage students to draw conclusions about validity and record them on chart paper.

Differentiated Instructional Support:

Instruction is differentiated according to learner needs, to help all learners either meet the intent of the specified indicator(s) or, if the indicator is already met, to advance beyond the specified indicator(s).

- Some students may need more modeling before they are ready to work in groups and independently.
- Share your thought process with students as you model the lesson on an overhead transparency.

Interdisciplinary Connections:

The essence of this lesson is appropriate for any type of research. When students are asked to research information for a content area, they should demonstrate an awareness of determining the validity of their sources.

Materials/Resources Needed:

For the teacher: Two samples of resources to be evaluated, magazine articles for each group to examine (select some that are valid and others that are not), overhead transparencies, transparency Blackline Master 1, chart paper, markers, two editorials on the same topic that take different positions and Blackline Master 2.

For the students: Magazine article for each group, resources related to each group's research question, checklist (Blackline Master 1) and guidelines for determining validity (Blackline Master 2).

Key Vocabulary:

- publication date
- subjective
- objective
- validity
- primary source
- secondary source
- reliability
- propaganda

Attachments:

- Checklist for Determining Validity (Blackline Master 1)
- Guidelines for Determining Validity of a Resource (Blackline Master 2)