*English Instructional Plan – Determining Validity of Sources 6-8*

**Primary Strand: Research 6.9, 7.9, 8.9**

**Integrated Strand/s: Communication and Multimodal Literacies 6.1, 7.1, 8.1 Reading 6.6, 7.6, 8.6**

**Essential Understanding:**

* understand that a primary source is an original document or a firsthand or eyewitness account of an event.
* understand that a secondary source discusses information originally presented somewhere else. Secondary sources provide analysis, interpretation, or evaluation of the original information.
* understand the purposeful and responsible use of the Internet.
* understand using multiple sources of information produces a more complete understanding of a topic.
* understand that an author’s viewpoint refers to a bias or subjectivity toward the subject; a viewpoint can be positive or negative

**Essential Knowledge, Skills, and Processes:**

* understand and use the online, print, and media references
* evaluate the validity, authenticity, and credibility of texts, using questions, such as:
  + Does the writer have something to gain from his opinion?
  + Does the information contain facts for support?
  + Is the same information found in more than one source?
  + Is contact information provided?
  + Is there a copyright symbol on the page?
  + What is the purpose of the page?
  + What is the date of the most recent publication?
* differentiate between a primary and secondary source.
* provide a list of sources using a standard form for documenting primary and secondary source.

**Primary SOL: 6.9b, 7.9b, 8.9b** Collect, organize and synthesize information from multiple sources; **6.9c, 7.9c, 8.9c** Evaluate and analyze the validity and credibility of sources;

**Reinforced (Related Standard) SOL: 6.9f, 7.9f, 8.9f** Demonstrate ethical use of the Internet

**7.6e** Identify the source, viewpoint, and purpose of texts **8.6e** Analyze the author’s qualifications, viewpoint, word choice, and impact, **6.6h**, **7.6d,** **8.6g** Differentiate between fact and opinion,

**Academic Background/Language:** Students will need to understand vocabulary related to validating sources including: valid, invalid, fact and opinion, justify, author’s purpose, credibility, primary and secondary sources, and the definition of copyright. Students also need to understand that critical thinking is needed to evaluate sources.

## Materials:

* Variety of print materials (the teacher should choose some valid others that are not valid)
* Variety of online sites (the teacher should choose some valid other that are not valid)
* Evidence Sheet
* Consider this in choosing valid sources:
  + If the site ends in .edu, it is most likely an educational institution. Be aware, however, of political bias.
  + If the site ends in .gov, it is most likely a reliable government website. These sites usually provide good sources for statistics and objective reports.
  + If the site ends in .org, it is usually a non-profit organization.
  + <https://artsedge.kennedy-center.org>
  + <https://www.readworks.org/>
  + <https://www.quill.org/>
  + <https://www.commonlit.org/>
  + Books—authored, edited and published
  + Newspapers and magazines
  + Peer reviewed journals
  + Peer reviewed articles
  + PhD or MBA dissertations and research
  + Public library
  + Scholarly articles
  + Isolated studies or academic research
  + Educational institutions and their websites
* The following sources are not considered reliable until confirmed by a reliable source:
  + Wikipedia: although this is a good starting point for finding initial ideas about a topic, some of their information and attached resources may not be reliable
  + Blogs, tweets
  + Personal websites
  + Forums
  + Sites created by organizations that may have political or biased agendas
  + Sites that provide biased information
  + Self-published sources
  + Opinionated articles such as editorials

## Student/Teacher Actions: What should students be doing? What should teachers be doing?

* Teacher will gather a variety of sources (paper copies as well as internet sites) for students to analyze and differentiate between credible sources and sources that need validation.
* The teacher will model how to determine if a source is valid or invalid. The teacher will use overarching characteristics of valid and invalid sources to create class anchor charts as the class discusses how to identify them.
  + Consider these characteristics of determining the credibility of sources:
  + **Author** – Information on the internet with a listed author is one indication of a credible site. The fact that the author is willing to stand behind the information presented (and in some cases, include his or her contact information) is a good indication that the information is reliable.
  + **Date** – The date of any research information is important, including information found on the Internet. By including a date, the website allows readers to make decisions about whether that information is recent enough for their purposes.
  + **Sources** – Credible websites, like books and scholarly articles, should cite the source of the information presented.
  + **Domain** – Some domains such as .com, .org, and .net can be purchased and used by any individual. However, the domain .edu is reserved for colleges and universities, while .gov denotes a government website. These two are usually credible sources for information (though occasionally a university will assign a .edu address to each of its students for personal use, in which case use caution when citing). Be careful with the domain .org, because .org is usually used by non-profit organizations which may have an agenda of persuasion rather than education.
  + **Site Design** – This can be very subjective, but a well-designed site can be an indication of more reliable information. Good design helps make information more easily accessible.
  + **Writing Style** – Poor spelling and grammar are an indication that the site may not be credible. In an effort to make the information presented easy to understand, credible sites watch writing style closely.
  + As the teacher creates anchor charts of valid and invalid sources, a few sample sources may be displayed. It is important that the teacher identify sources that we often use but are invalid, i.e. Wikipedia.
  + The teacher may use [this site](https://sites.google.com/site/evaluatingsourcecredibility/home/tutorial/step-2-determine-authority) as a resource to helping students determine the credibility of sources.
* The teacher will assign students to groups of 2-3 students each. Students will work together to review, read, and evaluate sources for their validity. Students will work to sort resources as they are evaluated.
* The teacher should explain to students that although a source has lots of opinion, the author of the piece must be considered in evaluating the source. For example, if there is an editorial in the New York Times written by a former president, one would not label it invalid simply because it contains many opinions.
* Once the resources are sorted between valid and invalid, groups will differentiate between fact and opinion within each source. Students may use sticky notes to label and identify fact or opinion within each source.
* Finally, students will choose one source to fully evaluate (valid or invalid) and identify the main idea of that source. Students will “Stand up, Hand up, Pair up” in order to review their source with a partner. While sharing, each student will identify the resource, describe whether it is valid or invalid and why, using information gathered about the main idea and whether it is fact or opinion.
* Students will work to compose an evidence sheet about as many sources as they are able to evaluate.

**Assessment (Diagnostic, Formative, Summative):**

* The teacher will provide feedback to groups and individuals throughout the evaluation process. Students will work together to best determine the validity of sources. The evidence sheet may by used formatively to inform instruction about the students’ ability to evaluate the validity and credibility of sources.

**Writing Connections:**

* Students will compose an evidence sheet proving materials are valid or not valid

**Extensions and Connections (for all students):**

* Students may independently research and create a list of five to ten sources for classmates to research and determine whether or not the sources are valid. Students may complete this activity independently or with a partner.

**Strategies for Differentiation:**

* Teacher may provide all resources (sites, articles, blogs, tweets, etc.) to students.
* Teacher may provide sample sentence frames for students to use in describing their resources as they determine the validity and credibility. Sentence frames may include: “This is a valid source because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”, “This is not a valid source to use because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”, “I found this source to be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ because\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”.
* Teacher may provide a list of essential vocabulary (which may be content specific) with definitions and any required background knowledge needed to fully understand the context of the primary or secondary source being read.

*Note: The following pages are intended for classroom use for students as a visual aid to learning.*

