



Evaluating Sources of Agriculture Issues

Middle School Food and Agricultural Literacy Curriculum

Precepts

- A. Action
- A4. Identify and Use Resources

National Standards

- CS.09.03.01.c. Demonstrate the use of technology in linking information from various sources.
- NL-ENG.K-12.1 – Reading for Perspective
- NL-ENG.K-12.3 – Evaluation Strategies
- NL-ENG.K-12.8 – Developing Research Skills
- NL-ENG.K-12.12 Applying Language Skills
- NT.K-12.5 – Technology Research Tools
- NT.K-12.6 – Technology Problem-Solving and Decision-Making Tools

Student Learning Objectives

- As a result of this **unit** the student will...
Evaluate current agriculture issues.
- As a result of this **lesson** the student will...
Identify four main sources of information when researching agriculture issues.
Identify strategies to distinguish credible sources of information.

Content Outline

I. Resources Available

- A. Internet
- B. Newspapers
- C. Magazines of all different types
- D. Interviews – a range of great resources

II. Tips to evaluating a resource

- A. Examine the author's credentials: Who authored the article? What are the author's credentials? Is the author an expert in the topic? Is contact information provided?

Time

Instruction time for this lesson: 45 minutes.

Resources

National FFA Organization. (2009). LifeKnowledge Online. Retrieved January 1, 2009, from <http://agedlearning.org> — National FFA Organization. (2003). LifeKnowledge Precepts and Signs of Success.

Tools, Equipment, and Supplies

Note cards
Writing utensils
Notebook paper – student's own supply
Overhead projector
MS.AI.1.2.TM.A – one per teacher
MS.AI.1.2.ASSESS.A – one per student

Key Terms

The following terms are presented in this lesson and appear in **bold italics**:

Trust

Credible

- B. Date: When was this information published? Is it still applicable? Is it outdated?
- C. Background: Who funded the research? Did a specific organization sponsor this article?
- D. Type of resource: Is the resource educational, opinion, media-generated, a non-profit publication, from a scientific journal, from a fictional or non-fiction book, or a respected document like an encyclopedia or dictionary?
- E. Relation: Does the information address or relate specifically to the topic you're researching?
- F. Repetition: Has this information been repeated in other resources, or is this something you've never seen and can't find verified in another source?

Interest Approach

Have a note card on each desk as students walk in to build suspense.

You can't go to the grocery store, turn on the TV, or check your e-mail without hearing about the latest celebrity gossip, and that is exactly what it is, gossip. Some gossip is true; some is not.



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Hopefully none of you get caught up in gossip, but it is still important to be able to distinguish between what is fact and what is fiction.

Today we are going to have the chance to be celebrities. When you hear TRUE, write down on your card two statements about yourself that are true and one statement that is false. Write statements that aren't obvious – so do not include statements relating to your physical appearance. When we are finished writing our facts down, we will read them out loud and as a class try to determine the facts from the fiction. What questions do you have? TRUE!

Allow time for students to fill out cards, and then take turns reading them out loud and guessing which statement is false for each student. Be cautious of any bullying tactics students might bring in from other situations.

How were we able to pick the lie out of the list?

Listen for body language, change in tone of voice, or already know person really well.

Why is it important to look for these clues?

Listen for reasons centered around having accurate information.

All of these reasons are correct. There is information all around us, literally right at our fingertips. It is important for agriculture education students to identify some key sources from which we get our information. Not only should we have a thirst for this information, but we should also have the tools necessary to discern what information we can **trust** and which we should be more cautious of. Today we will need to be good decision makers as we identify fact from fiction!

Summary of Content and Teaching Strategies

Objective 1. Identify four main sources of information when researching agriculture issues.

Students are asked to partner up and brainstorm a potential list of resources they would use to find information.

Raise your hand if after you take a test, you review your answers at least once.

Pause.

If you don't, you probably should, because checking your answers at least once will help prevent silly mistakes from happening.

Sometimes we think we put one answer down, or we understand the question fully, but after looking at it a second or even third time we might find more clarity. The same is true when we are researching agriculture issues. It is always important to use at least three different sources about the same topic when gathering our information.

When I say WRITE, write down as many sources of information on agriculture issues as you can think of. You may work with a partner next to you. Be prepared to share at the end of 30 seconds. WRITE!

Compile students' lists on the board and talk about how each of them can offer information on agriculture issues.

This is a great list of resources. Talking to people we know about a topic is a good avenue to find information. But what if these people don't know what we need to know? Where should we look for information in that case?

We are going to focus on four sources that we have available to us in this class as we learn about agriculture issues. You will be using these resources throughout this unit to research different issues: Internet, newspapers, magazines of all different types and interviews.

Objective 2. Identify strategies to distinguish **credible** sources of information.

The class will be divided into two groups. Each group will generate their own definition of trust and credible. Use **MS.AI.1.2.TM.A** for guided notes.

There are many sources we could use when researching and learning about agriculture issues. While the variety of sources is great, our ability to **trust** these articles is important when we gather information to form opinions. It is important that we can **trust** these sources, or that we find them **credible**.



Evaluating Sources of Agriculture Issues

Imagine a line down the center of this classroom. On this side of the line is team **Trust**. This side is team **Credible**. When I say DEFINE, your team will have 45 seconds to create a definition for the word that represents your team – either **trust** or **credible**. Each person on your team should be prepared to teach that definition to a member of the other team. What can I clarify? DEFINE!

It is time to teach the other team our definitions. Lock eyes with one person from the opposite team. When I lower my hand, go to that person and share your definition. When you have finished sharing your definitions, return to your seats. Ready? Go!

When researching agriculture issues, we must be able to evaluate if we can **trust** our resource and we must only use it if it is **credible**. When evaluating our resources, here are a few things to remember. Capture these items on some paper.

Display **MS.AI.1.2.TM.A**.

III. Tips to evaluating a resource

- A. Author: Who authored the article, do they have any credentials, are they a reliable author, are they an expert in their field, and is there information to contact them or verify their reliability?
- B. Date: When was this information published, is it still applicable, is it outdated?
- C. Background: who funded the research; did a specific organization sponsor this article?
- D. Type of resource: Is the resource educational, opinion, media-generated, a non-profit publication, from a scientific journal, from a fictional or non-fiction book, or a respected document like an encyclopedia or dictionary?
- E. Relation: Does the information address or relate specifically to the topic you're researching?
- F. Repetition: Has this information been repeated in other resources, or is this something you've never seen and can't find verified in another source?

As we think about agriculture issues and the sources of our information, what would be some consequences of gathering information from sources that were not credible or trustworthy? Allow students to respond.

You're right! Using sources of information that are not **credible** or **trustworthy** can cause confusion and people getting misinformation about a topic. Just like in our own lives, rumors can spread like wildfire causing hurt feelings and damaged reputations. But the source of the information may not be **credible** or **trustworthy**. When we hear a rumor, we should do our best to stop the wildfire from spreading and go to a **credible** source for accurate information. Today's discussion of sources of information and how to evaluate those sources is critical as we continue to expand our knowledge of agriculture issues.

Review/Summary

Utilize the Go-With-The-Flow e-Moment® to review content in both objectives. In this activity students represent the content as a flowchart or process diagram showing the linear, step-by-step relationships. Show a blank flowchart. As students view the flowchart, ask them to explain the relationships of the lines and shapes. Students may insert as many shapes as needed. Have students share with a partner or with the whole class, as time permits.

Today we began our discussion about **trust** and **credibility** by doing an activity which proved that not everything we hear or read is true. We understand that sources are important when learning about agriculture issues, but we must be able to identify them correctly and evaluate them for **credibility**. At the top of your paper write "Sources" and put a box around it.

Using the information we have discovered today, create a flowchart that illustrates the steps we should take before choosing the correct resource to use. Use boxes, arrows, lines, whatever you need to create your chart. Create this flowchart on the same paper where you took notes earlier. What questions do you have? You may begin.

Allow time for students to create

Whenever we are looking for quality – produce, meat, information, friends – our final decision is made after going through a process. Usually this is a process of elimination. This process is essential to making good decisions and avoiding the ones we can later regret. Just remember that it's okay to be selective, or picky, since it is most important to choose what is right.



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Application

Extended classroom activity:

Have the class identify three sources in which they could find the definition of agriculture. Students must be able to identify the reasons the source is credible.

FFA activity:

Students should list three individuals they could ask for help with an FFA CDE. They should identify why they trusted that source and why they identified them as credible on that topic.

SAE activity:

Students should locate one article on a topic that is related to their SAE area. They should identify why they trusted that source and why they identified them as credible on that topic.

Evaluation

MS.AI.1.2.ASSESS.A

Answers to Evaluation

1. Internet, newspapers, magazines, interviews
(1/2 point each)
2. D
- 3-5. Date, Type of resource, Repetition of information



I. Available resources

A. Internet

B. Newspapers

C. Magazines of all different types

D. Interviews

II. Tips to evaluating a resource

A. Author:

1. Who authored the article?
2. What are the author's credentials?
3. Is the author reliable?
 - a. Is this person an expert in this area?
 - b. Is their contact information provided to verify reliability?

B. Date:

1. When was this information published?
2. Is the information still relevant?
3. Is the information outdated or current?

C. Background:

1. Who funded the research?
2. Did a specific organization sponsor this article?

D. Type of resource: Is the resource educational, opinion, media-generated, a non-profit publication, from a scientific journal, from a fictional or non-fiction book, or a respected document like an encyclopedia or dictionary?

E. Relation: Does the information address or relate specifically to the topic you're researching?

F. Repetition: Has this information been repeated in other resources, or is this something you've never seen and can't find verified in another source?



Name _____

Short Answer

1. List two of the four resources we could use for conducting research.

A. _____

B. _____

Multiple Choice

Circle the letter with the correct answer.

2. When evaluating the credibility of the author, one should ask...

- A. Who authored the article?
- B. What credentials do they have?
- C. Is contact information provided?
- D. All of the above.

Circle the right answers.

- 3-5. Circle three things to consider while evaluating a resource.

- Number of pages
- Date
- Title of resource
- Type of resource
- Location of resource
- Pictures
- Repetition of information