Myth Detectives

Discerning the Reliability and Credibility of Sources

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Published by *K20 Center*

Subject	English/Language Arts	**Time Frame**	50 minutes
Course	Any Secondary Course	**Duration**	5 days

Essential Question

Why is it important to discern the reliability and credibility of the information we find?

Summary

In this lesson, students practice determining the relevance, reliability, and validity of information gathered while researching well-known urban legends. Students analyze the quality, usefulness, and accuracy of the sources they find using a provided framework. As their final product, students construct persuasive arguments using the CER (Claim, Evidence, Reasoning) strategy to report on the accuracy of famous legends.

Snapshot

Engage

Students will respond to true or false questions about a handful of urban legends.

Explore

Students will be assigned to small groups to research one of the provided urban legends and to find at least three sources of information on the accuracy and authenticity of the urban legend.

Explain

Groups will use the provided RAVEN framework to analyze the reliability and credibility of the sources they've found.

Extend

Groups will construct a CER, which includes a Claim about the truth of their urban legend with both Evidence and Reasoning to support their claim.

Evaluate

Groups will create a public service announcement (PSA) about how to discern whether information is reliable and credible.

Attachments

- Myths Presentation Slides.pptx

Materials

- Presentation Slides
- True False Statements Google Form (or your tool of preference)
- RAVEN Research info Graphic Organizer
- CER Map Template
- Raven

50 minutes

Engage

Optional Tech Note

The true/false statements below (or statements of your choosing) can be presented with the provided Google Form, which you can copy using this link.

Or you can build your own using another tech tool such as Mentimeter, Wayground, Kahoot, or Plickers. For a non-tech option, have students hold up red and green cards (red for false, green for true) while you read and/or show the statements on slides.

Use the attached presentation slides to guide the lesson. Begin with **slide 3** and invite discussion of the essential question: *Why is it important to discern the reliability and credibility of the information we find?* You may want to take some time to explain and discuss the reasoning behind this activity.

Move to **slide 4** and begin with a quick true or false game. At this point, it's not important that students know the "right" answer. The goal here is to get a picture of what we as a culture *think* we know about these topics.

Ideas for prompts to use. Ask your students to determine whether the statements below are true or false:

- In 64 C.E., Nero fiddled while Rome burned.
- Einstein, who won the Nobel Prize in physics, made poor grades in high school.
- Marie Antoinette's famous words, "Let them eat cake," inspired the French Revolution.
- Christopher Columbus' sailors feared sailing off the edge of the world during his voyage to find a trade route to India.
- There are alligators in the sewers of New York.
- Van Gogh never sold a painting in his lifetime.
- Napoleon's cannon shot the nose off the Sphynx.
- You should meticulously check your Halloween candy for razor blades.
- Fortune cookies are Chinese.
- Tigers and other ferocious cats roam the British countryside.
- Napoleon was shorter than the average man.
- Penguins mate for life.
- Sharks are drawn to human blood.
- One shouldn't swim immediately after a meal.
- Tomatoes are not a vegetable.
- Walt Disney is cryogenically frozen and interred under Disneyland.
- Saccharine causes cancer.
- Jack the Ripper was actually a surgeon.
- It is illegal to shout "Fire" in a crowded theater when there is no fire.
- Rasputin survived several assassination attempts.
- Dogs only see in monochrome.

50 minutes

Explore

Before moving on, review the learning objectives on **slide 5.** Explain that each of these points will be examined in the course of the lesson.

Display **slide 6** and give instructions to your students regarding dividing into groups. Have them number off 1-5, for example. Once everyone has selected a number, have them move into same-number groups.

Have groups select a group leader and a topic. Ask them to conduct research to determine the accuracy of each of the urban legends. Students should find at least three sources related to the myth they are assigned.

Move to **slide 7** and have students discuss the duties of each group member.

Move to **slide 8**. Have groups agree on a topic. Limit the number of groups who can research a single topic. Describe the task and introduce the **RAVEN Research Info Graphic Organizer**, which will prompt them to reflect on and rate the credibility of each source using the mnemonic:

- **Relevance:** Is the information relevant to your topic? Does it provide useful and applicable information?
- **Authority:** Who is the author and what are their credentials? Are they an expert in the field?
- **Verifiability:** Can you verify the information from other reliable sources? Are there citations or references provided?
- **Evidence:** What evidence does this source provide that supports a true/false judgment on the myth you are researching?
- **Neutrality:** Is the information presented in an unbiased and objective manner, or is there a clear bias or agenda?

Slide 9 and **slide10** explain the RAVEN research process. **Slide 11** gives your students a link to the RAVEN Research Info Graphic Organizer.

50 minutes

Explain

Show **slide 12** and explain each of the columns: Relevance, Authority, Verifiability, Evidence, and Neutrality. Monitor group work periodically to ensure that students are on task and understand the column headings. Once you have begun your exploratory work, think about what content challenges you.

Show **slide 13**. Have each group write down a challenge they encountered while conducting their research. Which part of the RAVEN criteria did they have the hardest time answering? What about their source made this part difficult? Examine their research challenges through lens of the Muddiest Point strategy.

50 minutes

Extend

Show **slide 14**. Before moving into analysis of the major argument, review the definitions of facts, opinions, and reasoned judgements. Ask one of the group members to take notes. Review the terms below:

- **Facts** are objective and can be verified.
- **Opinions** are subjective and based on individual viewpoints.
- **Reasoned judgments** involve critical thinking and the synthesis of information to arrive at a well-informed conclusion.

Show **slide 15**. Review in detail how to construct an argument using the CER format outlined on **slide 16**:

- **Claim:** Clearly state whether they believe the legend is *true* or *false*.
- **Evidence:** Present the evidence they gathered during their research, such as historical facts, expert opinions, or any other sources they deemed reliable using their RAVEN graphic organizer.
- **Reasoning:** Explain why the evidence they presented supports their claim.

50 minutes

Evaluate

Show **slides 17** and **18** as models for developing their claims. Have students document their arguments and present their arguments to the class using the provided **CER Map Template**.

Show **slide 19**. As a culminating activity, have students work in their groups to create a public service announcement (PSA) on the importance of recognizing reliable information and credible sources. Encourage them to use their research and creatively introduce the concept to the class.

Resources

- K20 Center. (n.d.). Claim, evidence, reasoning (CER). Instructional Strategy. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/156
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Kahoot. Tech Tool. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/637
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Mentimeter. Tech Tool. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/645
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Muddiest point. Instructional Strategy. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/109
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Plickers. Tech Tool. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/1533
- K20 Center. (n.d.) Raven. Instructional Strategy. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/3456
- K20 Center. (n.d.), Wayground. Tech Tool. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/2444