

Source: Can I Trust the Creators?

Students dig into an article to determine whether they can trust the story by investigating its producers and the sources within.

GRADE LEVEL: Middle and high school

TIME: 30-60 minutes

MATERIALS: Source: Can I Trust the Creators? worksheet (download), E.S.C.A.P.E. Junk News poster (download), internet access, a news story to evaluate in which at least two individuals provided information to the writer(s)

PREPARE

1. Make copies of the Source: Can I Trust the Creators? worksheet, one per student
2. Select a news story for students to research. (Depending on your angle for this topic, you may want to choose a real news story, a fake/questionable story, or both.) You also may allow them to choose their own news story.

DO

1. Ask students how they determine whether information they find online is trustworthy.
2. Introduce the E.S.C.A.P.E. acronym by writing the six key concepts on the board or projecting the poster. Explain that considering even one of these six concepts can help determine whether information is credible.
3. Explain that they will focus on source for this activity. Looking at the source means looking at who made or otherwise contributed to this story and trying to determine if they are trustworthy.
4. Divide students into pairs, or allow them to work individually. Distribute a news story for them to research or give them 5 minutes to find their own. Have each group take 5 minutes to read and summarize the news story.
5. Then, give students 10-15 minutes to answer the questions concerning the publication and writer of the original article and determine how much they trust the publication and writer.
6. Next, they should take 10-15 minutes to investigate the sources within the article. This is a tight timeline, but push groups to work quickly and broadly rather than getting bogged down.
7. Have groups/students share their findings. As a class, decide if the story or stories is/are trustworthy.

DISCUSS

1. After reading the story once, could you make a determination about the reliability of the source? Why or why not?
2. Were you able to determine if the publication and/or writer were reliable? Why or why not?
3. What information was most helpful to determining the publication's reliability? The writer's reliability? Explain.
4. What made sources within the article trustworthy? What made you question them? Explain.
5. Would you be more or less likely to trust information from a source that wanted to remain anonymous? Why?