

# LESSON: RESEARCH – VERIFICATION OF INFORMATION/INTEGRITY OF RESEARCH

**Essential Questions:** 1. How do I know if I can believe the sources I have found? 2. How do I give proper credit to the sources I am using?

**Objective:** At the end of this lesson students will be able to use guiding questions to verify sources and distinguish credible sources from non-credible ones.

**Grade Level:** 6 – 12

**Time Needed:** 50 to 90 minutes

**Materials:** Computer hooked up to a projector.

## Procedure

**Before Class:** Have students bring one of the books or sources they have been using lately to use as an example in class.

1. Pull up a website that does not cite its information and is not clear on its authority of a topic. ([http://sciway3.net/proctor/marion/military/marion\\_wbts.html](http://sciway3.net/proctor/marion/military/marion_wbts.html)) Poke through it with the students and then ask:
  - *How do we know the author is telling the truth?*
  - *What information is left out?*
2. After a brief discussion (about one minute), go to a website that does have sources and credible information ([www.mnhs.org](http://www.mnhs.org), or back to the MN 90 project, <http://www.pbs.org/civilwar/>).
  - *How do we know the author is telling the truth?*
  - *What is left out of the information given? Point of view? Perspective?*
3. This time around, the students and teacher can point to the research the author did and people they interviewed.
4. When researching, students need to consider what websites and books are trustworthy. Refer back to the discussion about bibliography.
5. *Ask students:* What makes something credible? Definition:
  - Offering reasonable grounds for being believed.
  - Of sufficient capability to be militarily effective.
6. *Ask students:* *What does that mean for History Day?* Have a discussion about these ideas for three to ten minutes. *What written or unwritten rules do you need to follow?*
7. With your partners or with another individual, pick one source and complete the **Worksheet: Verification, Integrity.**
  - What do you know about the author?
  - What information do you have that gives you that answer?
  - What information has the author given that you can trust?
  - What perspective does this author have?
  - Are they biased?
  - What information have you read other places?
  - How do you use their bibliography for your benefit?

8. Discuss with students the process of verifying information. Most sources should have a bibliography, a list of documents, writings, and other sources they used to come to their conclusions, or answer their research questions. You can look at those sources also to see how they got to their answers, and to find other information about your topic.
9. Ask students: *Now that you have verified that this information and/or author is accurate, how do we use it? Do you copy it exactly as the author said and put it in your paper? Why is it wrong to copy the words exactly and present them in your paper?*
  - a. Plagiarism (dictionary.com): The unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original work, as by not crediting the author.
  - b. **Teacher Note:** [Readwritethink.org](http://Readwritethink.org) has good information on plagiarism.
10. Now that you've established that plagiarism is wrong, brainstorm ways to avoid plagiarism with students. Ideas might include: Taking notes instead of copying, paraphrasing instead of printing word-for-word, using keywords and important points to keep track of what was gained from that source and being honest.
11. Using the source you brought in today, find three to five more sources from that source, using the bibliography. Also, consider the following questions about research questions:
  - Which of your research questions have you answered so far?
  - How do these answers help your understanding of the topic?
  - What new research questions do you have?
  - Where can you look to find those answers?