

Source Sleuth Sort

Look for clues that show whether a source can support your research.

6.R "The student will conduct research and read a series of conceptually related texts on selected topics to build knowledge on grade-six content and texts, solve problems, and support cross-curricular learning..."

NAME _____

DATE _____

RELIABLE SOURCE

A reliable source identifies who created it and supports its information with evidence you can check.

A community archive identifies its curator and displays scanned town council records.

UNRELIABLE SOURCE

An unreliable source hides who made it, makes claims without evidence, or repeats rumors.

A flashy ad promises that a magnetic ring will make homework effortless, yet it identifies no company or testing.

1 SORT _____ 8 items

For each source card, circle RELIABLE or UNRELIABLE, then choose two cards and explain which clues helped you sort them.

1. A university science center page names its author, date, and sources. RELIABLE UNRELIABLE
2. A newspaper article quotes two named emergency managers and links to a public report. RELIABLE UNRELIABLE
3. An unsigned post says, "Everyone knows this is true," and gives no evidence. RELIABLE UNRELIABLE
4. A state health agency fact sheet shows its update date and lists research links. RELIABLE UNRELIABLE
5. A video claims a new diet cures every illness, but it gives no creator or sources. RELIABLE UNRELIABLE
6. A social media account reposts a rumor without naming where it began. RELIABLE UNRELIABLE
7. A book from the National Park Service explains erosion and includes a bibliography. RELIABLE UNRELIABLE
8. A public library database article names an expert author and includes works cited. RELIABLE UNRELIABLE

2

PROVE IT

Explain your thinking

Pick two items from Part 1. For each one, tell how you knew where it belonged.

ITEM # _____ HOW I KNEW _____

ITEM # _____ HOW I KNEW _____

3

MAKE YOUR OWN

One of each

Write one new RELIABLE example and one new UNRELIABLE example.

RELIABLE

UNRELIABLE

CHALLENGE

Choose one UNRELIABLE card. Write two specific details you would need to check before you could use it for research.

PART 1 • SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	A university science center page names its author, date, and sources.	RELIABLE	It identifies the creator and provides dated, checkable evidence.
2	A newspaper article quotes two named emergency managers and links to a public report.	RELIABLE	It uses named experts and links to supporting information.
3	An unsigned post says, "Everyone knows this is true," and gives no evidence.	UNRELIABLE	It has no identified creator or supporting evidence.
4	A state health agency fact sheet shows its update date and lists research links.	RELIABLE	It is from an accountable agency and provides current, checkable research.
5	A video claims a new diet cures every illness, but it gives no creator or sources.	UNRELIABLE	It makes an extreme claim without identifying a creator or evidence.
6	A social media account reposts a rumor without naming where it began.	UNRELIABLE	It repeats an untraceable rumor rather than evidence.
7	A book from the National Park Service explains erosion and includes a bibliography.	RELIABLE	It comes from an accountable organization and includes a list of sources.
8	A public library database article names an expert author and includes works cited.	RELIABLE	It identifies a qualified author and provides sources that can be checked.

PART 2 • PROVE IT

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item.

PART 3 • MAKE YOUR OWN (SAMPLE ANSWERS)

- **RELIABLE:** A geology society article identifies the scientist who wrote it and provides a list of studies.
- **UNRELIABLE:** A message board comment says a phone app predicts earthquakes, but it does not identify its writer or show testing.

Challenge: For item 6, I would check who first reported the rumor and whether a government agency or expert source confirms it. Items 1, 2, 4, 7, and 8 are RELIABLE. Items 3, 5, and 6 are UNRELIABLE. In Part 2, students should name a concrete clue, such as a named creator, cited evidence, an unsupported claim, or an untraceable rumor.