

Source Sleuth Sort

Decide which sources are ready to use and which need checking.

7.R.1 "Evaluation and Synthesis of Information Formulate questions about a research topic, broadening or narrowing the inquiry as necessary. Collect, organize, and synthesize information from multiple sources using various notetaking formats..."

NAME _____

DATE _____

RELIABLE SOURCE

A reliable source clearly identifies who created it and supports its information with evidence, data, or named experts. It is published by a qualified person or organization.

A university archive page identifies its curator, collection record, and revision date.

NEEDS CHECKING

A source that needs checking may be missing an author, date, evidence, or trustworthy publisher. Do not use its claims until you can verify them with reliable sources.

A chain message predicts a rare comet event and tells readers to forward it without saying where the claim came from.

1 SORT

8 items

Circle RELIABLE or UNCERTAIN for each source, then choose two items and explain which details helped you decide.

1. A state health department page, updated March 2026, links to its disease data. RELIABLE UNCERTAIN
2. A book chapter by a historian lists its author, publisher, and sources. RELIABLE UNCERTAIN
3. A post says, "This school rule is changing tomorrow," but gives no name or evidence. RELIABLE UNCERTAIN
4. A science magazine article names its writer, date, and the studies it used. RELIABLE UNCERTAIN
5. An online ad says its energy drink guarantees better grades. RELIABLE UNCERTAIN
6. A video claims the Moon landing was filmed, but it gives no evidence or expert source. RELIABLE UNCERTAIN
7. A dated transcript records a park ranger describing a local wildfire she witnessed. RELIABLE UNCERTAIN
8. An AI-generated answer gives facts but lists no sources to check. RELIABLE UNCERTAIN

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 example of a reliable source and one new example of a source that needs checking.

RELIABLE

UNCERTAIN

CHALLENGE

Choose a source you would include in research, write one reason you would use it, and give a basic citation with the author, title, webpage or publisher, and date.

PART 1 • SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	A state health department page, updated March 2026, links to its disease data.	RELIABLE	A government health agency identifies itself, provides an update date, and links to supporting data.
2	A book chapter by a historian lists its author, publisher, and sources.	RELIABLE	The chapter identifies a qualified author and publisher and includes sources.
3	A post says, "This school rule is changing tomorrow," but gives no name or evidence.	UNCERTAIN	The claim has no identified author or supporting evidence.
4	A science magazine article names its writer, date, and the studies it used.	RELIABLE	The article identifies its author and date and points to supporting studies.
5	An online ad says its energy drink guarantees better grades.	UNCERTAIN	The ad makes an exaggerated product claim and is designed to sell a product.
6	A video claims the Moon landing was filmed, but it gives no evidence or expert source.	UNCERTAIN	The video makes a major claim without evidence or qualified sources.
7	A dated transcript records a park ranger describing a local wildfire she witnessed.	RELIABLE	This is a dated primary source from a named eyewitness about what she observed.
8	An AI-generated answer gives facts but lists no sources to check.	UNCERTAIN	AI-generated information must be verified, especially when it provides no sources.

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 newspaper article names its reporter, gives the publication date, and quotes two named experts.
- **UNCERTAIN:** A website promises a secret way to pass every test but does not identify who wrote it.

Challenge: I would include this article because it reports a university study and gives its publication date. Citation: Chen, Maya. "How Sleep Affects Teen Memory." Healthy Minds Webpage, 12 May 2026.

Items 1, 2, 4, and 7 are **RELIABLE**. Items 3, 5, 6, and 8 are **UNCERTAIN**; accept Part 2 and Part 3 responses when students identify accurate credibility details.