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

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.

UNCERTAIN

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.

ANSWER KEY # Source Sleuth Sort

GRADE 7 · 7.R.1

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.

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