

Evaluate a Web Source's Credibility

L11 · v0.1.3 · Learner copy

In this estimated 40-minute lesson, learners evaluate what a source can support for a specific question by checking its creator or access, purpose, evidence and method, date, and source trail. They state limits and a useful next check rather than treating one cue or a polished page as proof.

A five-move source check

Credibility asks how well the details in a source support what it says for the question you need to answer. Start with that question. Then check five things: (1) who made the source and what access or relevant experience the person has; (2) the source's purpose and any stated sponsor or interest; (3) what evidence it gives and how that information was gathered; (4) when it was made and whether the information still fits your question; and (5) whether an important claim can be traced to an original record or compared with an independent source that shows its evidence. Use a source only for what its details support. A source can be useful for one question and weak for another. A polished page, official-looking badge, old date, or personal story is one clue to examine, not proof by itself. Explain what you can conclude, what remains uncertain, and what you would check next. These fictional cards are offline practice examples, not real websites or reports.

Model: check one question

Model card: Maple Bend attendance note

FICTIONAL OFFLINE SOURCE CARD — no live website is shown.

Page title: Maple Bend Library Club Attendance Notes

Creator: Nia Torres, fictional library assistant

Date: October 20, 2025

Purpose: Report recorded attendance at recent club meetings.

Evidence: The note says sign-in sheets list 8, 11, 10, and 9 attendees at four after-school meetings held from September 25 to October 16. It says the counts were copied from those sheets.

Limits and links: The sign-in sheets are not attached. The note does not record why students came or missed a meeting, and it does not report a before-school trial. No underlying record link is shown.

Modeled evaluation

Question: How many people signed in to each of the four listed after-school meetings? Think aloud about who made the note, where its counts came from, and what the note cannot show.

Nia Torres, a fictional library assistant, made the note. It reports 8, 11, 10, and 9 people signed in at the four listed meetings. It says the counts were copied from sign-in sheets. Because the sheets are not attached, I would check them before treating the counts as verified. The note cannot tell why students came or whether a morning meeting would work.

Guided comparison: two fictional offline source cards

Guided card A: Maple Bend Student Council poll

FICTIONAL OFFLINE SOURCE CARD — no live website is shown.

Page title: Maple Bend Student Council Schedule Poll

Creator: Student Council survey team

Date: October 20, 2025

Purpose: Share Grade 6 students' stated availability for a possible weekly reading club.

Evidence and method: One question was sent to 120 Grade 6 students: "Which weekly meeting time could work for you?" Forty-eight students replied voluntarily. Of those replies, 14 chose before school, 25 chose after school, and 9 chose either time. The tally sheet is not attached.

Limits: Not all invited students replied. The poll records stated possible availability, not actual attendance.

Guided card B: BrightStart reading journal promotion

FICTIONAL OFFLINE SOURCE CARD — no live website is shown.

Page title: "A Better Morning for Every Reader"

Creator: BrightStart Shop Team; a shop link offers a reading journal for sale.

Date: 2022

Purpose: Promote a product.

Claim: "A before-school reading club helps every student focus all day." The page lists no survey, study, method, or supporting source for this claim. A decorative "Top Choice" badge has no explanation or linked results.

Guided evaluation

Question: Which meeting time did the Grade 6 students who answered say could work for them? Which card is more useful for that exact question, and why? State one thing the poll can show and one thing it cannot show. Then examine the BrightStart claim: What evidence supports it, and what would you check before organizers chose a time? Use or adapt: “For ____, Card ____ is more useful because _____. It reports _____, but it cannot show _____. Card ____ claims _____, but _____. I would check _____ next.” Do not judge by the badge or page design.

Guided notes or reply (6 lines)

Independent evaluation: two fictional offline source cards

Independent card C: Maple Bend club sign-up summary

FICTIONAL OFFLINE SOURCE CARD — no live website is shown.

Page title: Maple Bend Library Club Sign-up Summary

Creator: Nia Torres, fictional library assistant

Date: November 3, 2025

Purpose: Summarize current members' stated availability.

Evidence and method: A one-question form was sent to all 18 current club members on October 31.

Twelve replied: 7 chose before school, 4 chose after school, and 1 chose either. The summary says members could select one answer. The tally sheet is not attached.

Limits: Six members did not reply. Stated availability is not the same as attendance at a trial.

Independent card D: Robin's bus-route notes

FICTIONAL OFFLINE SOURCE CARD — no live website is shown.

Page title: Notes from the Route 4 Bus Stop

Creator: Robin, a fictional Grade 6 student

Date: November 3, 2025

Purpose: Share a student's observations about morning travel.

Evidence and method: Robin says they asked 5 classmates who ride Route 4. Four said a before-school meeting might be hard because their bus arrives shortly before first period.

Limits and links: This is one student's informal conversation with 5 classmates, not a poll of every club member. No bus timetable or wider survey is linked.

Question: What can Cards C and D help organizers consider before testing a before-school meeting for current club members? Write 4–6 sentences. Explain what each source can tell about the question, identify each creator or relevant access, and explain each source's method or evidence. Explain how at least one source's stated purpose or perspective affects what it can support. Give a cautious conclusion, name at least one relevant limit, and suggest a useful next check. You may recommend any schedule; your score is based on source reasoning, not your schedule preference. Use the planner and rubric to check your response.

Independent source evaluation planner

Use Cards C and D to plan your 4–6 sentence evaluation. You may favor either schedule. Separate what each source reports from what it does not establish.

Question I am checking

Who made each source? What access or perspective do they have?

What evidence and method does each source show?

What purpose, date, or interest should I consider?

What can the sources not establish? What should I check next?

Draft your 4–6 sentence evaluation

Source evaluation rubric

Score each criterion 0–2; total 0–8.

Question and source fit — 2: Accurately explains what each source can tell about the question and identifies each creator or relevant access. 1: Gives some accurate, relevant source-fit or creator/access information, but leaves part incomplete or inaccurate. 0: Gives no accurate, relevant source-fit or creator/access information.

Purpose and perspective — 2: Explains how at least one source's stated purpose, interest, or perspective affects what it can support, without inventing motives. 1: Identifies a relevant stated purpose, interest, or perspective, but the explanation is incomplete, unclear, or partly unsupported. 0: Gives no relevant supported purpose or perspective reasoning, or only assigns unsupported motives.

Evidence and checking — 2: Accurately explains each source's method, sample, or source trail and proposes a useful date, record, or comparison check. 1: Gives some accurate, relevant evidence or checking information, but does not meet both parts fully. 0: Gives no accurate, relevant evidence or checking information; appearance or a badge alone is not evidence.

Limits and conclusion — 2: Gives a conclusion within the evidence, names a relevant limit, and suggests a useful next check. 1: Gives only one or two of those three elements accurately and relevantly. 0: Gives none of those elements accurately and relevantly.

Your score does not depend on which meeting time you prefer. A source may be useful for one question and limited for another.