

Lesson Plan for Evaluating Sources Using Lateral Reading

Learning Outcome: Students will be able to evaluate sources using lateral reading technique, in order to effectively determine their trustworthiness.

Have students complete the InfoLit – Core tutorial *Evaluating Digital Sources Using Lateral Reading* independently. Then class can be used for practice time completing their own lateral reading exercise, which is laid out in the tutorial in the Activity at the end. Instructors may choose to have students complete the activity on the InfoLit platform, or during class in a separate document. For the activity, students should:

- Part 1: Determine what site or situation they want to research and what discovery goal they have. (Examples include determining the background of a particular website, or learning about the background of a politician running for local office.)
- Part 2: Record their lateral reading search. They may use screencast software to record their screens and add narration explaining what you are doing, or take notes or do an audio recording as they search and take screenshots of the browser as they progress through the search. They may attach screenshots (.png or .jpeg files), screencasts (mp4 or mov files), and/or text (.doc, .docx, or .txt files) in the platform if you are having them work through the activity that way, or email directly to the instructor or use a class LMS to submit.
- If you are teaching in person, you can add additional aspects to the search, such as:
 - Have two students search on the same topic or source, and compare their search strategies and results. Did they come to the same conclusions, or different?
 - Have students work in groups on the same topic, but investigating different sources. Students can present to one another in the group with the goal of developing an understanding of the range of perspectives informing the topic they are exploring. This can be a helpful scaffolding exercise and launching pad to additional research work in the area they are exploring.
 - Have students present their screencasts or other search documentation to the class or small groups and have the group “workshop” the search process. Have them provide feedback about the techniques used, what the student did effectively and what if any additional lateral reading techniques they could have added.
 - If you are focusing on encouraging students to seek out diverse points of view on a topic, you may also want to assign students the tutorial *Finding Diverse Points of View*. That tutorial will build on their foundation of evaluation skills but add the lens of finding diverse perspectives. That tutorial includes an example evaluation. Consider having students complete a similar evaluation for sources they are using for a research project they have been assigned. Once they have completed this tutorial, have them discuss the following question:
 - How can techniques for lateral reading help researchers find and evaluate sources for diverse points of view? How did you use them in your research process? What were your results?

Complete the lesson by asking students to write out short exit slips summing up what they've learned about this evaluation technique and what additional questions they may have on source evaluation, which you can use to follow up in a future lesson or, when relevant, additional tutorials and videos from the Evaluating Sources section in InfoLit – Core, which can cover additional areas of source selection and evaluation (including the previously mentioned *Evaluating Sources for Diverse Points of View*, as well as *Evaluating Information*, *Research for Persuasive Writing*, *Synthesizing Information*, *News Literacy/Misinformation*, etc.).