

ENGL 203: Comparative Source Analysis

Part 1: Rubric due Feb 18

Part 2: Individual CSA paper due Feb 25

Purpose

Though countless sources of information exist on the internet, how do we know we can trust the information they contain? It is possible that any source may be biased, may attempt to manipulate the reader by withholding information, or may even provide false and misleading content. The reliability of a source is not only essential to establishing your credibility as an author, but it is also essential to making a well-informed and sound argument. For this assignment, rather than strictly evaluating the content and supporting information of a source, you will evaluate the *reliability* and *credibility* of a cluster of sources. This will help to prepare you for locating trustworthy and useful sources for your upcoming research project.

Part 1: Rubric

In groups, you will create a rubric to use when judging the credibility of sources. You will test your rubric against different types of sources to see how it holds up. Then, you will refine it and polish it to make a presentable, useful resource for the rest of the semester.

When developing your rubric with your group, you may wish to consider the following areas and questions:

- **Author:** Indicate the author (if any) and their credentials.
 - Do authors of the source give evidence of their credentials?
 - Can you find any bias that the author may hold?
- **Publisher:** Indicate the publisher of the document.
 - Is there evidence that the content of the source is affected by commercial sponsorship?
 - Is the argument aimed at a specific and identifiable audience? How might that change your interpretation?
- **Content and Context:** Identify the thesis and the main arguments that the author makes.
 - Does the author cite or reference other scholarly sources?
 - What type of data or other information does the author use to support his/her argument? How does the author validate this information? How does the author present this information?
 - When was the article published? Does this change its credibility?
 - Is the content logically arranged?
 - Where did you find this source? How does its context affect its content?
 - Does the publication date or location in which the source was created hold any relevance?

Part 2: Paper

Your group will be gathering a cluster of sources pertaining to your topic. Drawing as needed from *Everything's an Argument* and the Wikipedia articles we discussed, evaluate 6 of the sources from your given cluster in this paper, and (individually) write a 5-6 page paper in which you a) describe why being able to assess credibility is important; b) present and discuss your rubric; b) present and discuss the sources you evaluated in order (ascending or descending).

You should write this paper for an audience that does not know how to assess the credibility of a source. Walk them through the process that you have taken to assess your cluster sources – in many ways your conclusions (scores) are less important than the detailed explanations of how you arrived at those conclusions.

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Your paper should adopt the following structure:

1. **Title page.**
2. **Introduction.** Introduce the topic and why evaluating source reliability is important.
3. **Rubric Discussion.** Discuss the rubric you are using to evaluate source reliability. This should include a definition of each criterion; a description of what constitutes a “high” and a “low” criterion score; and why particular items are weighed more heavily than others in overall source scoring, as applicable. Be sure to reference the rubric.
4. **Source Analysis.** Provide an objective summary and evaluation for each source used. **Remember, this paper is about the *reliability* of sources. It is not about how well an argument is presented or whether or not you agree with the argument.** Be objective in your writing. Typically, an effective source analysis should be about a page in length per source. Be sure to:
 - a. Properly introduce the article title and author for each source and objectively summarize the article.
 - b. Evaluate the reliability of the source. Be sure to address and score rubric criteria for each source, providing explanations to support your evaluation. Note that some rubric criteria may require outside research to verify source reliability. Be sure to fully cite all sources used.
 - c. Conclude each source analysis with an overall scoring or evaluation. Again, provide an explanation to support your evaluation.
 - d. Sources should be arranged from least reliable to most reliable. Use transition statements between each source analysis, relating back and making comparisons to earlier source analyses as appropriate.
5. **Conclusion.** Discuss the results of your source analysis. Can you make broader claims about the kinds of things to look for when evaluating credibility?
6. **References Page.**
7. **Appendices.** Attach your rubric and a table of your scoring for each source.

Your paper will be a minimum of 5-6 pages in length (not including reference page), 12 point font, Times New Roman, double spaced. You must utilize APA in-text citations for any quotations used, as well as include an APA reference page and title page.

Evaluation

This paper is worth 150 points. You are strongly encouraged to use outside resources to refine your paper and verify your sources. You will be primarily evaluated on three criteria:

1. your ability to describe and support the rubric you are using;
2. your ability to effectively describe the process of evaluating source reliability through specific examples; and
3. your ability to use APA formatting

Make sure that you have:

- ★ Provided and described criteria to evaluate the reliability of a source.
- ★ Summarized each source objectively.
- ★ Evaluated the credibility of each source.

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- ★ Compared and contrasted sources to one another.
- ★ Used proper APA in-text citations.
- ★ Checked for grammar, spelling, and any other mechanical errors.