

# American History- Blizzard Bag #1

Mr. Green

Determining the Credibility of Sources

High School American History Content Standard #2

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Review the information below to complete the assignment:

When writing a term paper, doing research, or reading to learn about a topic, you should only use material from a credible source. This is accomplished by checking sources for the following:

1. Qualifications and reputation of the author: For example, an engineer's report about the collapse of the World Trade Center in 2001 is probably more reliable than a report by someone without training in engineering.
2. Agreement with other credible sources: Another factor in determining credibility is whether or not the information agrees with other sources. Such as, does the author provide citations from professional sources, or news and journalistic sites?
3. The perspective and bias of the author: Perspective and bias are two factors in determining if a source is credible (believable) and reliable (accurate). Perspective is the position from which something is seen. Each of us looks at conditions and events according to our own set of past experiences and values. It is helpful to understand the perspective of the author of the information.  
Bias or prejudice causes the author to think about issues and events in a particular way. One form of bias is propaganda. Propaganda is one sided use of information, often misleading, to guide readers to a particular conclusion. A source using propaganda usually is not credible.  
The credibility of a source should be challenged if it uses stereotypes. Stereotypes are generalizations about a group in which a defined set of characteristics is assigned to a group. Stereotypes are often used with certain religions, race or ethnic groups, age groups, and women.
4. Accuracy and Internal Consistency. Do the different facts and arguments in the source work together, or do they seem to contradict one another? Are there contradictions between facts within the source? If so, it may not be a reliable source of information.
5. Circumstances under which a source is created. If it is a primary source, what did the author personally witness and under what conditions? If it is a secondary source, what sources did the author consult?

On the next page, use the information above to complete the assignment.

After each description, explain why the source would or would not be a credible and reliable source of information.

1. An older author writes an article about American youth. He condemns all young people. He describes them as feeling entitled, lazy, and spoiled. He states that they are inferior compared to his generation. The author provides no data for his claims.

Answer:

2. A speaker presents a lecture on the U.S. Industrial Revolution. She has a Ph.D. in history. The speaker has authored several books on the Industrial Revolution. The speaker has taught history for 20 years at the university level.

Answer:

3. A U.S. soldier writes a magazine article about the U.S. War on Terrorism. The soldier served several tours of duty in the Middle East. He experienced active combat duty. He also has received extensive military training.

Answer:

4. A poster from the North Korean government shows American soldiers killing innocent civilians. There are no other citations or data included with the poster.

Answer:

