



E/LA Virtual Learning

English I

May 11th, 2020



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Lesson: May 11th, 2020

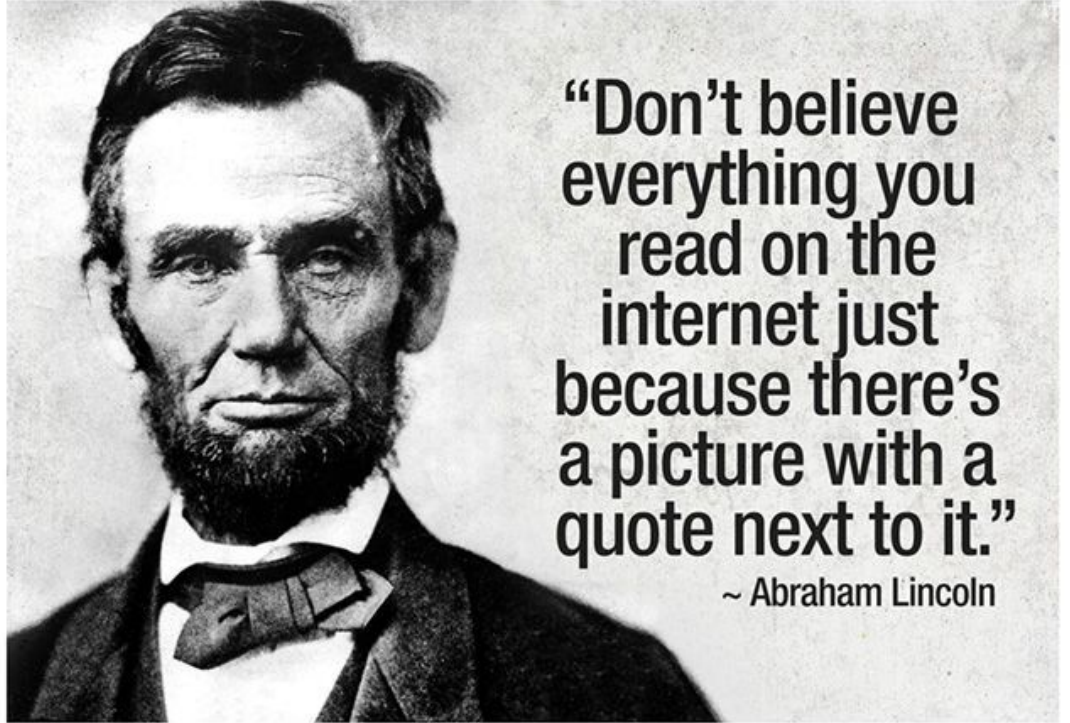
Objective/Learning Target:

I can evaluate the validity of a source

I can conduct research on a question I chose or generated
and explain my findings.

Do Now:

React to the image at right. What does it ask us to think about?



Do Now, ex:

The image wants us to reconsider how often we take information we find on the internet as accurate without looking into it more deeply. We often assume that what we are viewing is accurate without giving any consideration to its source. The quote is ironic because Abraham Lincoln's life ended a good 100+ years before the internet was invented.

Two Day Focus

Over the next couple of days we will look at some ways to verify whether or not information we are viewing on the internet is reliable, and ways to access accurate information about topics we are exploring.

Lesson: Internet Media Literacy

Prepare for a bombshell: folks on the internet are not always honest with us. There are a number of things they do to try to trick us, for a number of reasons. Consequences for believing something we see on the internet that are not true can be as minor as looking silly when talking to friends or teachers, or serious legal consequences.

Minor Consequences

In 1998, Lyle Zapato created a pretty extensive [website](#), imploring readers to “Help Save the Pacific Northwest Tree Octopus from Extinction!” A worthy cause if I’ve ever heard one. The only problem is, there is no such creature.

What are the consequences for believing this is true? They are pretty minor. The website itself does not ask for money, but encourages you to engage in activism on your own. So maybe you write a letter to a Congressmen that gives an aide a good laugh, or make an Instagram video that you later have to take down when you discover that the site is a hoax. Embarrassing, yes, but overall, no real consequences.

More serious consequences

During the 2016 election cycle, inspired by information released by Wikileaks, a conspiracy theory began circulating on the internet that Hillary Clinton and the Democratic Party were running a human trafficking ring out of the basement of a Washington DC area pizza shop.

While these claims may seem no more plausible than the existence of a tree octopus, in December of 2016, a North Carolina man got in his vehicle and drove to the alleged site of the human trafficking, AR-15 in tow, and fired 3 shots inside the pizza shop. Fortunately, no one was hurt. He was arrested, pled guilty to 3 crimes, and sentenced to 4 years in prison.

Activity: Explore Dihydrogen Monoxide

The good news is that we can avoid issues like this by simply checking to see if sources we find are valid.

Let's start with a question:

Do you support the ban of Dihydrogen Monoxide?

How can we find information to help us answer that question.

Activity: generate questions, search for answers

What do we need to know to answer this question? Generate some questions in the table in [this document](#).

You'll need to "File-Make a Copy" in order to edit the document. Change "Copy of" to your name.

Activity: Read about how to check reliability of sources.

We've probably found answers to most of our questions. But how do we know the information we've found is any good? [Here are 4 things we can do to try to determine if a source is valid.](#) Read through the document. Can we check any of these things on our FAQ page about Dihydrogen Monoxide?

Also, these are good questions to ask about sources that we use in independent or school-directed research.

Activity: Read news article excerpt

The first thing I would do is try to find a news source. Read [this excerpt](#) from a 1997 *Washington Post* article about Dihydrogen Monoxide.

Activity: Realize you've been had.

Ope. Looks like we've been had. But there were clues to spot along the way. First of all, if I Google the term, no real reliable sources show up until *The Washington Post* article, which, of course, lets us know it's a parody. The information about the dangers of Dihydrogen Monoxide is not corroborated by any credible sources.

The author of the web page is Tom Way. Who is that? What are his affiliations? A reputable source would share this information with its readers.

Though the website claims to have been updated today, and has lots of information that meets my needs, my uncertainty about the accuracy and authority of the information presented on this site should be a red flag for me. This is not a reliable source.

Writing/Reflection:

So, should Dihydrogen Monoxide be banned? In a short writing, answer the question, and describe what you've learned from this experience.

Writing/Reflection, ex.

Well, since it's water, and we need it to live, no, I don't think Dihydrogen Monoxide should be banned. This activity helped me understand that it's easy to become alarmed by false information that we see on the internet, and that I should probably try to verify claims I find through multiple sources, and examine the credibility of the author first before I make assumptions about whether or not something is true.