

# Determining the Best Sources

When students begin to develop their inquiry skills, it is important that they have a foundation of how to best choose and analyze sources of information they will be using for research.

**Time:** 25 minutes

**Materials:**

- chart paper and marker, or interactive whiteboard
- large Venn diagram
- at least two different Websites on a given topic

**Grouping:** whole class and small groups

### Procedure:

1. **Brainstorm** with students all the possible sources that they can use to find information when doing their research for their inquiry question, e.g., Websites, books, magazines, film clips, DVDs, photographs, audio clips, and so on.
2. Chart the sources and then explain to students that today you will be using the Internet to find information about the question, “Why should we protect nature?”

**Teaching Tip:** You can either use a student’s inquiry question to research or create a generic question that you will explore with the class.

3. Use your question to do a search on the Internet. Allow students to see how many results were generated and use a think aloud strategy as you filter out sources.

*There are many possibilities that my search has generated. I am going to use the URL or address to help me identify the publisher of this information which will help me determine its reliability. Remember that the first part of the address tells who publishes the site and the second part after the period gives additional information. For example, “.com” means it is commercial, “.edu” means it is educational, and “.gov” means it is a government Website. Using this information will help me choose a few sites to explore.*

4. Guide students in choosing two websites to delve into deeper. Once you have chosen the two sites, compare and contrast them. Use the following prompts to help guide small-group or class discussion:
  - Does the author have a bias or specific point of view?
  - How can I tell?
  - How trustworthy is this source?
  - Will this information help me in my inquiry?

5. A Venn diagram can be used to compare and contrast the viewpoints of the two sources. Once done, have students share out and create an anchor chart to visually support them as they determine the best sources for their own inquiry.

6. Ask students to think about their own inquiry questions. Invite them to choose a resource and determine if it would be a good source for their own inquiry.

**Teaching Tip:** If several students have similar inquiry questions, this could be an opportunity for some partner sharing.