Evaluating media sources

Students are growing up in a complex media environment – it’s clear that many students will be getting their news through social media (Department of Education and Training 2021a). This section will explore some principles to be applied to evaluating media sources. Note, it is important that all resources selected for the classroom are in line with policies of [selecting appropriate material](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/selecting-suitable-teaching-resources/policy).

Guidance on evaluating sources

1. All media is written from someone’s perspective – media content is ‘framed’ by the author and media organisation to include and exclude information.
2. All media is produced or distributed through a media organisation – ownership of content and distribution processes is always a factor (and this can be complicated with big platforms such as Twitter, TikTok or YouTube, as there are loose editorials but a lot of curation through algorithms to link audiences to specific media content).
3. Always ask ‘What editorial or journalistic guidelines is this author bound to?’. For example, journalists writing for *The Age* are bound to the MEAA’s Journalist Code of Ethics but there are no such expectations for an influencer on Instagram, even if they are covering similar content.
4. When analysing media we should ask what sources or evidence are supporting this piece. Doing this effectively requires a lot of background knowledge and the teacher should be model this a lot to indicate the sort of thinking that goes into it. Questions that guide analysis of sources include:

* If the research is by a minor think tank, what does this mean?
* What is the sample size of the study? Do other experts in that area agree with this?
* What other sources confirm or deny the ideas in the piece?
* Does the author have a history of disinformation, fake news, incorrect assertions, etc.?

To get students started, it is helpful to share a clear list of reliable news sources. Many young people will be getting their information through social media and so explicit instruction about journalism helps to balance this media ‘diet’.

Note: No media is entirely objective or unbiased; each text needs to be examined. Opinion pieces are not closely regulated in Australia and so particular care needs to be taken with opinion or analysis, particularly from commercial broadcasters or print sources.

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| Source | Owner | Notes |
| [Al Jazeera](https://www.aljazeera.com/) | Qatari international public media | Useful for coverage of global issues |
| [Australian Broadcasting Corporation](https://www.abc.net.au/) (ABC) | Australian public broadcaster | Useful links and/or programs:   * [Fact Check](https://www.abc.net.au/news/factcheck/) * [*Behind the News*](https://www.abc.net.au/btn/) * [ABC Radio Melbourne (774)](https://www.abc.net.au/radio/melbourne/) * *Foreign Correspondent* * *The Drum* * *Q&A* |
| [Seven Network](https://7plus.com.au/) | [Seven West Media](https://www.sevenwestmedia.com.au/) | Includes 7plus, 7 News, Channel 7 |
| [Channel Nine](https://www.9now.com.au/) | Nine Entertainment | Includes Channel 9, 9Now |
| [Channel 10](https://10play.com.au/) | Paramount Global | Includes 10Play, Channel 10 |
| [Herald Sun](https://www.heraldsun.com.au/) | News Corp Australia |  |
| [Kids News](https://www.kidsnews.com.au/) – News Corp service aimed at children | News Corp Australia | Produced as a classroom resource suitable for students from Grade 3 to Year 8 |
| Local newspapers (independent) | [Community Newspaper Association of Victoria](https://cnav.org.au/) |  |
| [Leader Community Newspapers](https://www.heraldsun.com.au/leader) | News Corp Australia |  |
| [News.com.au](https://www.news.com.au/) | News Corp Australia |  |
| [Sky News](https://www.skynews.com.au/) | News Corp Australia |  |
| [Special Broadcasting Service](https://www.sbs.com.au/news) (SBS) | Australian public broadcaster | World News, Dateline |
| [TIME for Kids](https://www.timeforkids.com/) – student-friendly, USA-based *TIME Magazine* service | TIME USA | Produced as a classroom resource by the publisher of *TIME Magazine* |
| [The Age](https://www.theage.com.au/) | Nine Entertainment |  |
| [The Australian](https://www.theaustralian.com.au/) | News Corp Australia |  |
| [The Conversation](https://theconversation.com/au) | The Conversation Australia and New Zealand | Published as a not-for-profit collaboration of academics and journalists |
| [The Economist](https://www.economist.com/) | The Economist Group |  |
| [The Guardian](https://www.theguardian.com/au) (Australia) | Guardian Media Group/Scott Trust |  |
| [Sydney Morning Herald](https://www.smh.com.au/) | Nine Entertainment |  |
| [3AW](https://www.3aw.com.au/) | Nine Entertainment | Melbourne talkback radio |

Media ownership information adapted from ACMA’s [Media Interests Snapshot](https://www.acma.gov.au/media-interests-snapshot).