



A TOOL TO SUPPORT THE CRITICAL EVALUATION OF ONLINE TEXTS

The purpose of this evaluation tool is to support students in critical reading online. The tool helps readers pay attention to different factors affecting the credibility of online texts, as well as the depth of their evaluation. The tool allows teachers to provide feedback on the skills of their students. The tool can also be used to provide peer feedback.

Task assignment and scoring students' reasoning:

The teacher can assign their students the task of evaluating several (e.g., three) online texts on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = not very credible, 5 = very credible), and ask the students to give reasons for the scores verbally. With the evaluation tool, the reasoning can be scored according to five criteria on a scale of 0 to 2 (0 = the criterion was not used at all, 2 = the use of the criterion was deep).

When giving scores for the reasoning, the student's age level as well as the versatility and depth of the evaluation should be considered. High school students should be versatile in their reasoning and, for some of their responses, in-depth evaluation is also required (2 points). Whereas, for example, a sufficient skill level for fifth- and sixth-graders is to use more than one evaluation criteria, with the evaluation remaining on a more superficial level. Skilled primary school students can be guided towards a more in-depth evaluation. So, the skill requirements increase with age and the development of cognitive skills.

A skillful reader evaluates the credibility of a text in a versatile and in-depth manner from different perspectives. However, this doesn't mean that every online text should be evaluated systematically from all perspectives. A single evaluation criterion may be better suited for evaluating one text than another. However, it is important to be able to use different evaluation criteria in a flexible way.

Based on the published article:

Hämäläinen, E. K., Kiili, C., Rääkkönen, E., & Marttunen, M. (2021) Students' abilities to evaluate credibility of online texts. The role of Internet-Specific Epistemic Justifications. *Journal of Computer-Assisted Learning*, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcal.12580>

Tips for the teacher on using the evaluation tool:

- The tool can be used in different school subjects because online texts of many different topics are suitable for evaluation with it.
- The tool is also suitable for different age groups (from around Grade 5), as long as the subject matter and the texts to be evaluated are chosen according to the age level.
- It is most productive to choose different online texts around the same subject with even conflicting information for students to evaluate.
- The credibility of the online texts being evaluated should vary, so that the students can also learn to evaluate uncredible texts – which may be more difficult for young people to evaluate.
- The teacher can make paper copies of the online texts in advance and use them for evaluation, evaluation can be done in pairs or small groups OR the teacher can display each online text to be evaluated on their computer.
- After evaluating the online texts, the teacher can introduce the tool (chart) and the answers can be evaluated together OR through peer review. It's easier for the teacher to give feedback and focus attention on the criteria to be evaluated if everyone evaluates the same texts.

OR

- The teacher can collect the group's answers, score them, and introduce the tool when returning the answers to the students. This way, the tool can be used to give more individual feedback on the answers.
- Of course, the tool can also be introduced and given to the students to use in evaluation without a separate task assignment or scoring.

