

After this lecture, students will be able to:

1. Articulate the difference between a news outlet and a news Source.
2. Use the "I.M.V.A.I.N." criteria to evaluate sources in news stories.
3. Justify reasons for differential ratings of sources' credibility based on IMVAIN analysis.
4. Use specific examples to illustrate the difference between a source who asserts and one who verifies.
5. Use a three-part test to judge the reliability of anonymous sources.

These skills relate to course outcomes 1 & 2

This slide intended for instructors as a focusing tool, but can be shared with students to prime them. Each lecture will include a slide like this with specific lecture outcomes that refer to course outcomes.

Here is what the syllabus declares students will be able to do if they successfully complete the course:

1. Analyze key elements of news reports - weighing evidence, evaluating sources, noting context and transparency - to judge reliability.
2. Distinguish between journalism, opinion journalism and un-supported bloviation.
3. Identify and distinguish between news media bias and audience bias.
4. Blend personal scholarship and course materials to write forcefully about journalism standards and practices, fairness and bias, First Amendment issues and their individual Fourth Estate rights and responsibilities.
5. Use examples from each day's news to demonstrate critical thinking about civic engagement.
6. Place the impact of social media and digital technologies in their historical context.



When it comes to judging the credibility and reliability of news reports, you the news consumer have two main concerns: Evidence and Sources. Last week we talked about evidence. And its accumulation, which is the verification process that's essential to V.I.A. We thought about the qualitative difference between Direct and Indirect evidence. Today we think about the **people** who are quoted in a news report.



(Lecturer: rehearse animations so you are ready to click through this)

ANIMATION: All the answers are hidden. Only the Image, headline and “Direct Evidence” and “Indirect” come up automatically. When you’re ready, each successive click brings up a new bullet point, starting with the direct evidence side of the chart, followed by Indirect.

In the lecture on Truth and Verification, we walked through this exercise to illustrate the differences between Direct and Indirect Evidence. Now let’s do it again, thinking about the people who provide Direct and Indirect evidence, what we call sources.

(Have a student write class’ responses on the blackboard, then click to bring up comprehensive list)

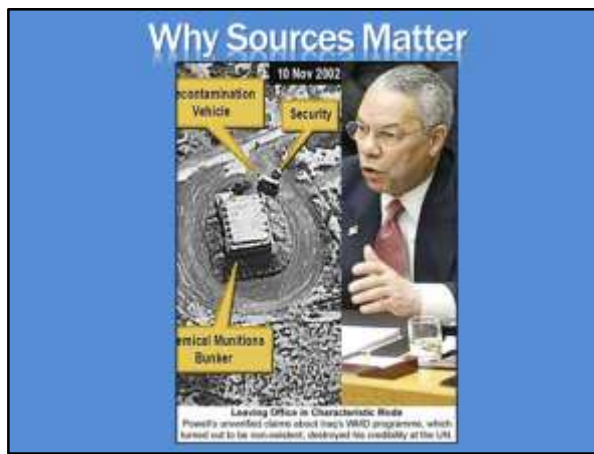
DIRECT: Driver of car; Eyewitnesses; Breathalyzer report; Driving records; Accident reports for that roadway.

INDIRECT: Driver’s lawyer; Campus police (unless witnessed); University officials; Friends and relatives of victims; Family of driver; Students on campus.



(LECTURERS NEED TO MOVE SWIFTLY THROUGH THIS WMD MATERIAL TO LEAVE TIME FOR THE REST)

After 9/11/2001 and then in the months leading up to the March, 2003 invasion of Iraq by U.S. forces, the New York Times had scoop after scoop by star reporter Judith Miller, whose long work in the region gave her connections no one else had. The picture she painted was that Saddam Hussein had nuclear weapons and was ready to use them. For all the accusations that the Times is a Democratic Party organ, it's interesting to note she was delivering the same message as the Bush White House, which may be why few questioned the reports.



On February 5, 2003, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell addressed the United Nations Security Council with evidence, he said, that Saddam Hussein had Weapons of Mass Destruction and that the invasion of Iraq would be the only way to stop Hussein from using them on the U.S. or other enemies. He is what you'd call a top-notch source and he was saying what the Times was reporting: Look Out. Iraq has WMD and will use them. By March The Times and CBS News reported their joint polling showed 55% of Americans supported an invasion of Iraq.

(Aside to lecturers, At that time, Bill Keller (now the Times' executive editor) was a columnist and wrote admiringly of Powell's performance:

"Senator John Kerry seemed to come down from the fence last week after Colin Powell's skillful parsing of the evidence.

We reluctant hawks may disagree among ourselves about the most compelling logic for war -- protecting America, relieving oppressed Iraqis or reforming the Middle East -- but we generally agree that the logic for standing pat does not hold. Much as we might wish the administration had orchestrated events so the inspectors had a year instead of three months, much as we deplore the arrogance and binary moralism, much as we worry about all the things that could go wrong, we are hard pressed to see an alternative that is not built on wishful thinking. "

Why Sources Matter



U.S. Invades Iraq to Capture WMD

More than 130,000 Iraqis have died in the conflict that began with the “Shock and Awe” bombings on March 19, 2003. Over the last 8 years, more than 4,400 U.S. soldiers were killed and 31,827 were wounded in action.

Why Critical Thinking About Sources Matters

Conflict in Iraq - msnbc.com

CIA's final report: No WMD found in Iraq

Recommends freeing detainees held for weapons knowledge

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Associated Press
updated 4/25/2005 9:24:44 PM ET
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WASHINGTON — In his final word, the CIA's top weapons inspector in Iraq said Monday that the hunt for weapons of mass destruction has "gone as far as feasible" and has found nothing, closing an investigation into the purported programs of Saddam Hussein that were used to justify the 2003 invasion.



No WMD were found.



Animation: On click, NY magazine clip fades away and apology appears.

What, people began to ask, were we doing in Iraq?
How did the Times get it so wrong?

On May 26, 2004, the New York Times published a lengthy description of what the paper got wrong and how that happened.

It boiled down to sources, as New York Magazine pointed out.

Anonymous sources, whose personal interests, it turns out, made them poor partners in a disinterested search for the truth,

[CLICK TO BRING UP TIMES APOLOGY](#)

There were people in our government and elsewhere who had set out to hoodwink the press. But a careful news consumer armed with the ability to evaluate sources for themselves...might not have trusted the New York Times' reporting because so much of it was based on un-named sources providing unverified, uncorroborated material.

Easy to say in hindsight.

To improve your foresight we introduce today an advanced vocabulary that brings clarity and nuance to your critical analysis of the sources who are the basis for so many news reports.



(ANIMATION: First three clicks go from Nixon waving farewell from Marine 1 through a series of headlines detailing his fall. Fourth Click brings up the Deep Throat covers.)

ASK: Who is this guy? (it's Nixon on the steps of Marine 1)

It is pretty tempting to dismiss all anonymous sources as untrustworthy, especially after the WMD debacle.

But when corroborated with other kinds of evidence, un-named sources can be the only way news consumers learn about serious problems in government or elsewhere.

An anonymous source was one key to the Washington Post's investigation of the attempted cover-up of the role Nixon's White House and campaign played in a break-in at the headquarters of the Democratic National Committee.

"Deep Throat" was first introduced to the public in the book written by Washington Post reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein about how they broke the Watergate story. His identity was the best-kept secret in Washington until June 2005, when his imminent death prompted him to go public. He was Mark Felt, the 2nd-in-command at the FBI and he fed the reporters a series of tips the FBI had been forced to sit on by the Nixon Whitehouse.

The scandal would eventually lead to the resignation of President Nixon as well as prison terms for six White House staffers and presidential advisers.

Felt was the key to the Washington Post's Watergate investigation. Without his information, The puny Washington, D.C. newspaper would not have been able to take on the Executive Branch of the U.S. government.

Smart Questions to Ask Yourself:

- ✓ Who is this person?
- ✓ How would he or she know?
- ✓ Does anyone support that version?
- ✓ Does this person just give you an opinion?
- ✓ Does this person have a reason to mislead you?

(Don't copy these. Wait for the mnemonic device)

ANIMATION: EACH QUESTION COMES UP WITH A CLICK

Don't write these down...just think about what they mean, because in a few minutes we'll give you a much easier way to remember the ideas. The people who are quoted in a news report...We call them SOURCES, Not to be confused with OUTLETS, which produce the news.

So put down your pens and think with me for a minute to make sure you understand the big concepts.

(CLICK TO NEXT SLIDE)



An anti-Barney's petition has blossomed, following allegations that the luxury department store has twice sicced the police on black customers who legally bought merchandise. With rap mogul Jay Z scheduled to launch a luxury clothing line this fall at Barneys, online activists are building support for a petition calling on him to pull out of the Barneys deal in order to penalize the store for what some are calling "shop and frisk" racial profiling.

Ask: Have you signed the Petition?

Would you, based on what you have heard?

Whose version of events do you trust? WHY?

<http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/jay-z-new-problem-barneys-deal-article-1.1496058>

Judging the Reliability of Sources

Independent Sources Are **Better Than** Self-Interested Sources

Multiple Sources Are **Better Than** Single Sources

Sources Who **Verify** Are **Better Than** Sources Who Assert

Authoritative/**Informed** Sources Are **Better Than** Uninformed Sources

Named Sources Are **Better Than** Unnamed Sources

(Mnemonic Device: **I'M VAIN**)

(ANIMATION: On Click the general questions fade and the Mnemonic, IMVAIN fades in.)

For the purposes of this course, here's how we'll methodically rate sources who show up in news stories.

Independent vs. Self-interested

Multiple vs. Lone or Sole source

Verifies vs. Asserts

Authoritative/**Informed** vs. Uninformed

Named vs. Unnamed

In past semesters, students have memorized the 5 strongest characteristics with this mnemonic device: **I'M VAIN**

These are straightforward ideas. Let's see what happens out in the messy real world.

Preparing You For The Exam

HOW DO YOU RATE U.S. ATTORNEY MICHAEL MOORE AS A SOURCE OF INFORMATION ABOUT HIS OFFICE'S REVIEW OF EVIDENCE?

	1 Not at all	2 Somewhat	3 A great deal
Independent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Multiple	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Verifies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Authoritative or Informed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Honest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Rate Moore on a scale of 1-3, with 1 being unreliable, 2 being somewhat reliable and 3 being very reliable. **AND** explain your rating in two or three sentences.

You'll Be Asked to Methodically Evaluate Sources,
Rate Their Reliability and Explain Your Rationale

On final exam and the mid-term exam, you'll rate sources using a systematic approach like this. On each of the five elements, you'll rate the source 1-3 and then, weighing the circumstances and the nature of the source, you'll give them an overall rating, with an explanation of how you arrived at that score.

There is rarely a single perfect answer. Remember, we're not teaching you what to think so much as we are working to teach you how to think, how to articulate your own conclusions about the news.

Judging the Reliability of Sources

Independent Sources
Are **Better** Than
Self-Interested Sources

Okay, rule 1...

A source who has a personal interest in the outcome may not even know how that influences their perceptions. It's the purest kind of cognitive dissonance.

So, a source who doesn't have a stake in the outcome, who is therefore independent, is usually .

Let's be clear: Rational Self Interest, looking after your health, your wealth, your loved-ones and your comrades is not the same thing as selfishness, the childish or irrational desire to possess everything.

You've seen Leonardo DaVinci's "Vitruvian Man", which was his ground-breaking reduction of human proportions to geometry.

We used that memorable image a couple of lectures ago to help you think about journalistic independence.

Today we use it again, to reinforce your understanding of independence and self interest.

Today, we use it to think about the independence of SOURCES, the people who are quoted or interviewed in news reports.



(LECTURER. ANIMATION AUTOMATICALLY SPINS THE VITRUVIAN MAN IN, IN ADDITION TO THE FOUR AREAS IN WHICH OUR INDEPENDENCE IS CHALLENGED.)

Sources are, like you, pulled in all directions by a variety of allegiances:

- ALLEGIANCE We can't be neutral about the religious (and political) beliefs and comrades we choose;
- INTELLECT We are not neutral about what we think we know as a result of our education and unique experiences;
- LOVE Every code of ethics warns professionals we can't be neutral about the family we are born into, the family we spawn and those we love;
- MONEY And when our finances are imperiled, we can't be expected to make an independent or neutral observation.

So, when a reporter offers you a witness or expert or observer, you want to know of any major conflicts of interest. Of course a Cardinal says the Church isn't to blame for pedophile priests, of course a surgeon thinks every ailment requires surgery, of course the Dad says his kid never hurt anyone before he shot the neighbor, of course the sales manager says the car is awesome.

Newsday

Brentwood man Marcos Alonso Zea pleads not guilty to terror charges



Mother:

"It's a lie," his mother, Sandra Zea, a native of Guatemala, said in Spanish. "He has a good heart."

"This is unjust, what they are doing," she said. "This boy is not involved in anything. He doesn't drink, he doesn't smoke, he doesn't do drugs. He's a very healthy boy."

ANIMATION: SLIDE OPENS WITH HEADLINE AND PHOTO. CLICK 1= MOTHER'S DEFENSE OF SON

A Brentwood (NY) man is arrested by FBI agents and charged with attempting to join a branch of al-Qaida in Yemen, as well as for conspiring with a previously arrested Babylon man to wage "violent jihad," officials said.

He pleads not guilty. A five-count indictment accuses him of conspiracy to commit murder in a foreign country, and attempting to provide material support to terrorists. The other three counts, to which Zea also pleaded not guilty, involved obstruction of justice and attempted obstruction of justice in an effort to conceal his terrorist activities, federal prosecutors said.

Here's what his mother says.

CLICK

ASK: On a 1-3 scale, from not at all to extremely reliable, how do you rate her reliability?

WHY? (Lecturer. Don't make it overly simple. Despite her self-interest, she may be very well-informed about her son.)

Disruptions: How the F.A.A., Finally,
Caught Up to an Always-On Society

A Self-Interested Source



Paul Misener, vice president for global public policy at Amazon

Mr. Misener said that going into the committee he knew it wasn't a matter of science. "Several years ago, we filled up a commercial airplanes (Republic Airlines) with Kindles and turned them all on," he said. "Something like 150 Kindles; the plane didn't experience any problems."

ANIMATION: SLIDE OPENS WITH HEADLINE AND PHOTO. CLICK 1= Misener quote, job title. CLICK2="A SELF-INTERESTED SOURCE"

Nick Bilton, a technology writer for the New York Times, has been reporting on the FAA's prohibition on in-flight use of cell phones and other mobile transmitters.

"According to the F.A.A., 712 million passengers flew within the United States in 2010. Let's assume that just 1 percent of those passengers — about two people per Boeing 737, a conservative number — left a cellphone, e-reader or laptop turned on during takeoff or landing. That would mean seven million people on 11 million flights endangered the lives of their fellow passengers. Yet, in 2010, no crashes were attributed to people using technology on a plane. None were in 2009. Or 2008, 2007...

ASK: On a 1-3 scale, from not at all to extremely reliable, how do you rate Mr. Misener's reliability on the question: Is it safe to use mobile devices on an airliner?

WHY? (Lecturer. Don't make it overly simple. Give voice to students who say Misener should know about Kindle radio emissions.)

The Fight Over Fracking



In Pennsylvania, where hydraulic fracturing is a booming business, a coalition of natural gas drilling companies is fighting higher taxes on natural gas drilling companies.

Drillers pay an impact fee to state and local government. A local Fox News station reports drillers have paid more than \$400 million since the fee was imposed in 2012. Pennsylvania Democrats want to increase the rate and use the money on a number of state programs unrelated to gas production or environmental protection.

Self-Interested Sources:

Shale Coalition:

"Every square inch of the Commonwealth is benefiting from this generational opportunity," the coalition said in a statement. "It would be irresponsible and ill-advised to advance massive new energy taxes that would strike an unnecessary blow to one of our economy's most important, thriving and promising sectors."

Pennsylvania Governor's Campaign Manager:

"Hundreds of millions of dollars have been reinvested in local communities and Pennsylvanians are able to buy cheaper energy, which allows them to spend more on other priorities," said Mike Barley, Corbett's campaign manager.

MarcellusProtest.org Environmental Organization :

The shale oil and gas boom generates tangible social costs that undermine the quality of life in rural communities. Communities and states must take these real costs into account when they consider approving controversial new oil and gas fracking.

A story like that will typically include strong partisans on either side and, ideally, neutral observers with a grasp on the technical and factual issues. ASK: WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE SELF-INTEREST OF EACH OF THESE SOURCES?

(You're looking for students to surface the following issues)

Shale Coalition: represents gas companies who profit from fracking. Higher fees presumably cut into profits.

Governor's Campaign Manager: a bit more complex. Corbett, a Republican incumbent, both relies on gas company donations and, by political inclination, would be pro-industry. The tax increase is proposed by Democrats. A governor of any stripe has to demonstrate an ability to attract new jobs.

MarcellusProtest.org: listen for student tendency to rate environmental organizations as selfless or at least not motivated by money. A battle like this is very good for an activist group, helping build membership, raise money and increase power. If they beat Corbett on this one, it makes them a political player to be feared.

The problem with self-interest is that even though it's a negative, it is also a constant of sorts. A really authoritative source will be one who is close to the activity and has a dog in the fight. But because she is so far inside, she may also have personal experience, documents or photos or other evidence that verifies what she is saying.

Independent Sources

"I think the story being told by both sides is not accurate.

...People who say it's really wonderful, people who say it's really bad; in reality it's between the two."

Tim Kelsey is a professor at Penn State University who's been analyzing the economics of the state's gas boom. He says the story of shale gas and Pennsylvania's economy is nuanced.

Having taken News Literacy, we hope students look for reporting that includes neutral fact-based sources, as well. Kelsey presumably does not have a financial interest in the outcome of the Pennsylvania fracking fee battle.

ASK: WHAT IS THE VALUE OF A NEUTRAL PARTY?

WHAT IS THE DOWNSIDE OF A NEUTRAL PARTY?

(You're looking for students to surface the obvious, but also the less obvious point, which is that partisans, being deeply engaged, tend to have dug into the issue more deeply than people with no dog in the fight. A professor, though, can often be a great source because they both dig in deeply and do not have a financial stake in the outcome. Plus, academic freedom rules give them the freedom to say what they really think, without significant risk)

BUT A Self-Interested Source Can Be A Reliable Source



A BACKLOG'S HUMAN FACES Kathryn Rausch with her mother, Doris Hink, 89, who has dementia and is the widow of a World War II veteran. The Department of Veterans Affairs took nearly two years to process her claim for a survivor's pension.

The New York Times

Veterans Wait for Benefits as Claims Pile Up

Each appointment and lost document has added weeks to the processing, now in its 15th month. So have skeptical department examiners, who have requested additional information on whether Mr. Selsky's heart palpitations and vision loss are related to his multiple sclerosis. "This should be a slam dunk," Ms. Selsky said. "He keeps getting worse, and they keep fighting and fighting and fighting with us. The stress is unbelievable."

An enormous backlog at the Department of Veteran Affairs has meant that veterans have not been getting their benefits in time to help with medical problems.

To illustrate the impacts of this backlog, the reporter interviewed veterans who were being denied these benefits. What is the self-interested view of these veterans?

Think of the Vitruvian Man diagram: financial, emotional, intellectual...what compromises their independent thought about this event?

Now...does that mean their information is invalid?

We expect you to be nuanced about this, not making black-or-white ratings based on one single analysis point.

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/28/us/veterans-wait-for-us-aid-amid-growing-backlog-of-claims.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

On An Exam

	1 Not at all	2 Somewhat	3 A great deal
Independent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Multiple	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Veritas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Authoritative or Informed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Honest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Insert
Nuance
HERE

Rate _____ on a scale of 1-3, with 1 being unreliable, 2 being somewhat reliable and 3 being very reliable.
AND explain your rating in two or three sentences.

The “Explain” Box Is Where You Make Nuanced Remarks About Self-Interest

ANIMATION: CLICK 1=THE “INSERT NUANCE HERE” NOTE AND THE UNDERLINE UNDER “EXPLAIN” APPEAR.

You’d rate the veterans who are lacking benefits as highly self-interested, but then point out in the “Explain” box that they, more than almost anyone else, are able to provide solid information about the impacts on veterans.

Judging the Reliability of Sources

Multiple Sources
Are **Better** Than a
Single Source

In the courtroom, we call it corroboration. In scientific circles, we say data is stronger if multiple researchers conducting the same experiment replicate the findings. It's more than just strength in numbers, which is a logical fallacy, by the way. If several people independent of one another, are saying the same thing...you can trust it more.

Reconstructing the Blackwater Incident in Nusoor Square



(NEWS FELLOW LINK VIDEO HERE)

(Lecturer: This is a long piece, 6:27, but an excellent demonstration of the power of multiple sources, many of whom are also independent and/or Interested in very important ways)

Now let's watch this story and think about corroboration.



Blackwater.wmv

(NEWS FELLOW LINK VIDEO HERE)

Have students enumerate the number and variety of corroborating sources.

Based on that, how reliable is this report?



ASK: Do you evaluate these sources differently as a group than you evaluate them one-by one?

Why is that?

ASK: Break these sources down for me.

How do you evaluate each one?

- **Omar Wasso**, the rooftop witness, who is a pro-American supporter of Kurdistan
- **Erik Prince**, the President of Blackwater Security
- **The two police officers**, Ali Khalaf Salman and his partner
- An investigation by **the U.S. Army**
- A statement from **the State Department**, which had hired Blackwater
- **Wounded Taxi driver** (phonetic) Baras Hadoun

Judging the Reliability of Sources

Sources Who **V**erify
Are **Better** Than
Sources Who Assert

Where are we now?

I.M..... **V**

ASK: What is the difference between Verify and Assert?

In the report on the Blackwater shooting, which sources are able to verify what they say, and which are merely asserting?

Verifying or Asserting?

The Washington Post

Tunisians worry about loss of freedoms gained under the Arab Spring

Text Size Print E-mail Reprints

By Elizabeth Bryant | Religion News Service, Published: October 5 | Updated: Monday, October 8, 11:25 AM

"I have no figures, I have no scientific studies," said Khadija Cherif, Tunis-based secretary-general of the International Federation of Human Rights. "But the assessment I make daily is that the vast majority of women are veiling because of pressure from their family or neighborhood or political manipulation."

It's important to remember that these are not black/white distinctions.

In this case, the source makes a clear assertion, admits there's no data to support his claims. He offers anecdotal evidence. So while he is not able to verify with direct evidence, he is honest about this.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/on-faith/tunisians-worry-about-loss-of-freedoms-gained-under-the-arab-spring/2012/10/05/542a80ce-0f12-11e2-ba6c-07bd866eb71a_story.html

Verifying or Asserting?

"Some of the Neanderthals, however, may have survived to this day in some mountainous wooded habitats that are more or less off limits to their arch foes. No clothing on them, no tools in hands and no fire in the household. Only round-the-clock watchfulness for a Homo sapiens around."

Igor Burtsev, head of the International Center of Hominology in Moscow -- which investigates so-called snowmen



ASK: How do you rate this source, Igor Burtsev, who is asked to confirm an apocryphal story about the existence of the Yeti, whose existence his group is set up to study? Is he making an assertion, or backing a fact claim with evidence?

Verifying or Asserting?

"This is a species that hasn't been recorded for 40,000 years. Now, we know one of these was walking around ten years ago... If one were to go back, there would be others still there."

Professor Bryan Sykes, a geneticist from the University of Oxford, found a 100 per cent match with a sample from an ancient polar bear jawbone



ASK: What is the difference between that source and this one?
Is he making an assertion, or backing a fact claim with evidence?

Verifying AND Asserting?

Breast Milk Donated or Sold Online Is Often Tainted, Study Says

A source who asserts...

"If you get milk from an unscreened sharer, you put your child at risk," she said. "I hate to say this to an informal sharer, because they are trying to do good. But they are playing a game of Russian roulette."

...and also verifies with information

"Most staph and strep are harmless at normal levels," Dr. Keim said. "But some of the levels we found were very high." Nine percent of the milk-sharing samples contained dangerous levels of staph, and a handful had unusually high strep levels. Salmonella "doesn't belong in milk at all," she said.

The New York Times recently reported on a new study that shows breast milk bought from two popular Web sites was often contaminated with high levels of bacteria, including, in a few instances, salmonella. The amounts detected in some samples were sufficient to sicken a child.

In this case, the source makes an assertion about Russian roulette, but also provides data to support a second comment about the staph and strep at levels that could cause sickness.

A Corollary to Truth & Verification:



Just like asking:
*"Did the Reporter
Open the Freezer?"*

You can also ask:
*"Did the Source
Open the Freezer?"*

One way to think of this is as a corollary to the Open the Freezer rule.

Shouldn't the reporter always ask a source if he or she opened the freezer? Isn't that what we mean by asserting versus verifying? After all, if the reporter in New Orleans had asked the soldiers 'did you see this yourselves' he wouldn't have made that mistake

One more way to think of it is this:

In Texas, when someone is accused of bragging they often come back with this phrase: *"It ain't braggin' if ya done it."*

Maybe that's a useful way to think about sources. *"It ain't assertin' if ya prove it."*

Judging the Reliability of Sources

Authoritative/**I**nformed Sources
Are **Better** Than
Un-informed Sources

IMVAIN...I-M-V

A/I (WE USE TWO LETTERS FOR ONE RULE)


Now we are at A/I...a reliable source is and Authoritative or Informed about the events or topics on which they are quoted (or interviewed).

Vaccines are Dangerous? Sez Who?



NEWS FELLOW LINK ABOVE-NAMED VIDEO TO THIS SLIDE, PLEASE.

This is Congresswoman Michelle Bachman. While running for President, she attacked a political opponent, Rick Perry, for enacting a law that inoculated young girls against Human Papilloma Virus, a cancer-causing STD.



VaccineBachman.wmv

NEWS FELLOW LINK ABOVE-NAMED VIDEO TO THIS SLIDE, PLEASE.

Is Bachman a reliable source in this case?
What about the source she heard it from?
How would a News Literacy student rate the reliability of either of them?

On An Exam...

	1 Not at all	2 Somewhat	3 A great deal
Independent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Multiple	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Verifies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Authoritative or informed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Named	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Rate Rep. Bachman
Rate the woman cited by Rep. Bachman

Quick drill with student on each point. Probably best if the Lecturer narrates the filling-out of the chart. (In pen-equipped lecture hall, you can write on the slide)

Bachman is not independent. She is using the example to attack a competitor

She is the only one citing this “evidence”

She provides no factual basis, therefore is merely asserting.

She is an attorney, not authoritative about infectious disease.

She is, however, named.

The woman Bachman cites? We don't know enough about her to even rate her. She is a non-source



ANIMATION: CLICK1 = TV news script including Mr. Moore's conspiratorial suggestions is then covered by answer from the Wildlife Health Center's lab
Shortly after New Years 2011, thousands of dead blackbirds were found near Beebe, Arkansas. Network news coverage included clips from Alfred Hitchcock's 1963 horror film: "The Birds."

In Beebe, local TV reporters interviewed a Mr. Moore, whose New Year mood was a little dark, suggesting officials were covering up something sinister that was causing the die-offs.

ASK: What kind of source is he?

CLICK AND ASK: What kind of source is the Wildlife Health Center?

(which autopsied the birds and found they died of trauma, likely from being startled on New Years Eve by fireworks...

Informed vs. Uninformed

Egypt's Military Expands Power, Raising Alarms



Egyptian Christians gathered with soldiers and riot police during a protest against an anti-Egyptian law.

© DAVID S. PHILLIPS
Published: October 14, 2011

“We will keep the power until we have a president,” Maj. Gen. Mahmoud Hegazy said. The military had pledged in formal communiqués last March to hold the presidential election by September. But the generals now say that will come only after the election of a Parliament, the formation of a constitutional assembly and the ratification of a new constitution – a process that could stretch into 2013 or longer.



Animation: headline and picture come in automatically. Pull quote fades in on click.

In this report on the transfer of power in post-Revolutionary Egypt, you have democracy activists complaining that they expected an elected government by now. The country is being run by the military, so the reporter asked a military leader who speaks for the military government. He is informed and high-ranking, therefore authoritative.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/15/world/middleeast/egypts-military-expands-power-raising-alarms.html>

Judging the Reliability of Sources

Named Sources
Are **Better** Than
Unnamed Sources

This one seems so obvious it is barely worth mentioning, but it's a good time to mention this complex idea:
Let's look at this simple idea, encapsulated in the very first slide: **"Says Who?"**

ASK: As a reader, how does it strike you when a news report relies on un-named sources?

Do you think there are good reasons for a source to be anonymous?

What are they?

Evaluating Anonymous Sources

Transparency
Characterization
Corroboration (evidence/sources)

We revisit this question later this semester, but here are some questions to ask when you're evaluating an anonymous source:

- Is there an adequate explanation why the source must remain anonymous (fear of retribution, prosecution)
- Is there sufficient information given to establish the source's value ("A witness...a co-worker")
- Is there other information in the story, from named sources, documents or other forms of evidence, that independently corroborates what the anonymous source says?

If not, are you being asked to take too much on faith?



Thousands displaced as Syrian authorities demolish Hama neighborhood

By Amir Ahmed, CNN

updated 9:32 AM EDT, Mon October 1, 2012



"Most of the residents have left their homes. The majority of them went to neighboring areas in the province. Some are still sleeping in the streets, and only a few of them remain in their homes," Abdallah said.

Another resident reached by phone Sunday said she's been living on the street, along with her two kids, for five days after her husband was detained by authorities and her home was burned. She did not want to be named for safety reasons.

ASK: Do you think there is a good reason for the witness to be anonymous?

The standard newsroom rule is that an anonymous source must personally known by the reporter and must have a legitimate fear of harm if they are named. They must provide information of serious public interest that is not available on the record and that has been corroborated by other sources, documents or photos. Did the reporters' use of anonymous sources in these examples meet those guidelines? Was the use of anonymous sources well-explained in each report? Are the exceptions acceptable?

http://www.cnn.com/2012/10/01/world/meast/syria-hama-neighborhood/index.html?iid=article_sidebar

Characterization

The image shows a screenshot of a news article from The New York Times, Asia Pacific section. The article title is "China Said to Have Made Call to Let Leaker Depart" by Jane Perlez and Keith Bradsher, published on June 21, 2013. The article text is partially obscured by a callout box. The callout box contains the following text: "Two Western intelligence experts, who worked for major government spy agencies, said they believed that the Chinese government had managed to drain the contents of the four laptops that Mr. Snowden said he brought to Hong Kong, and that he said were with him during his stay at a Hong Kong hotel."

ANIMATION: CLICK 1= BOX APPEARS WITH ANONYMOUS SOURCE “TWO WESTERN...”; CLICK2= WHAT THOSE SOURCES SAID

In this New York Times report on the flight of Edward Snowden, the reporters Jane Perlez and Keith Bradsher say the Chinese Government scooped up data US Intelligence analyst Edward Snowden is said to have copied from the NSA before he sought asylum in Hong Kong.

Their source?

CLICK

Two western intelligence experts who worked for government spy agencies

CLICK

Who say Snowden’s laptops were copied over.

Judging the Reliability of Sources

Independent Sources Are Better Than Self-Interested Sources

Multiple Sources Are **Better** Than Single Sources

Sources Who **V**erify Are **Better** Than Sources Who Assert

Authoritative/**I**nformed Sources Are **Better** Than Uninformed Sources

Named Sources Are **Better** Than Unnamed Sources

(Mnemonic Device: **I'M VAIN**)

Just a reminder of how we evaluate sources:

I

'M

V

A/I

N

Evaluate The Sources

The screenshot shows a petition page on Change.org. On the left, the text reads 'BARNEYS NEW SLAVES' with 'SLAVES' in red, handwritten-style letters. Below this, it says 'Petitioning Jana Fleishman' and 'Shawn Carter aka Jay Z: End all partnerships with Barneys New York'. On the right, there is a sign-up form titled 'Sign this petition' with a progress bar showing 'with 42,412 supporters'. The form includes fields for 'First Name', 'Last Name', 'Email', 'Street Address', 'City', 'State' (with a dropdown menu), 'Zip Code', and an optional field 'Why is this important to you?'. A red 'Sign' button is at the bottom of the form.

Would you sign the petition?

ANIMATION: CLICK 1= WOULD YOU SIGN. CLICK 2= PETITION ITSELF APPEARS

Trayon Christian, 19, of Queens tells NBC news that after he bought a \$349 Ferragamo belt on April 29 he was handcuffed and detained for two hours before being released with no charges.

In his lawsuit, Christian, a mechanical engineering student, said when he bought the belt, Barneys telephoned police to report a criminal act. When he stepped out of the store with his shopping bag, he was handcuffed on the sidewalk and brought to the 19th Precinct, the lawsuit said.

Police interrogated him "as to how a young black man such as himself could afford to purchase such an expensive belt and that the debit card he had in his possession had to be fake," the lawsuit said.

Michael Palillo, a lawyer representing Christian, said his client had saved up earnings from a work-study program at New York City College of Technology and was excited to treat himself to a trendy belt he'd admired on some of the rappers he follows on television.

Undercover police swarmed Kayla Phillips, 21, of Brooklyn at a subway station and demanded to see her credit card after she left Barneys with her purchase of a \$2,500 Celine purse on Feb. 28, said her lawyer, Kareem Vessup. Phillips, a nursing student, had received a tax return and decided to splurge on the designer purse, Vessup said.

Both have filed notice that they intend to sue the store.

CLICK1

Would you sign a petition calling on JayZ to drop his business with the store? Which source convinces you?

CLICK2

As of Friday, Nov. 1, there were 42,000 signatures. Here's the online petition at Change.org

Weighing Sources: Are You Ready to Sign a Petition to Jay-Z?

The two Barneys customers, Trayon Christian and Kayla Phillips, said this week they were detained by police after making expensive purchases.

Christian sued Barneys, saying he was accused of fraud after using his debit card to buy a \$349 Ferragamo belt in April. Phillips filed a notice of claim saying she would sue after she was stopped by detectives outside the store when she bought a \$2,500 Celine handbag in February.

"Barneys New York has zero tolerance for any form of discrimination and we stand by our long history in support of all human rights," the luxury retailer said in a statement.

"I move and speak based on facts and not emotion," the statement said. "I haven't made any comments because I am waiting on facts and the outcome of a meeting between community leaders and Barneys. Why am I being demonized, denounced and thrown on the cover of a newspaper for not speaking immediately?" he said, referring to local newspaper headlines.

How do you rate the Barneys spokesperson?
I. M. V. A./I. N.

Evaluate The Source

The New York Times

Black Shoppers at Barneys and Macy's Say They Were
Profiled by Security

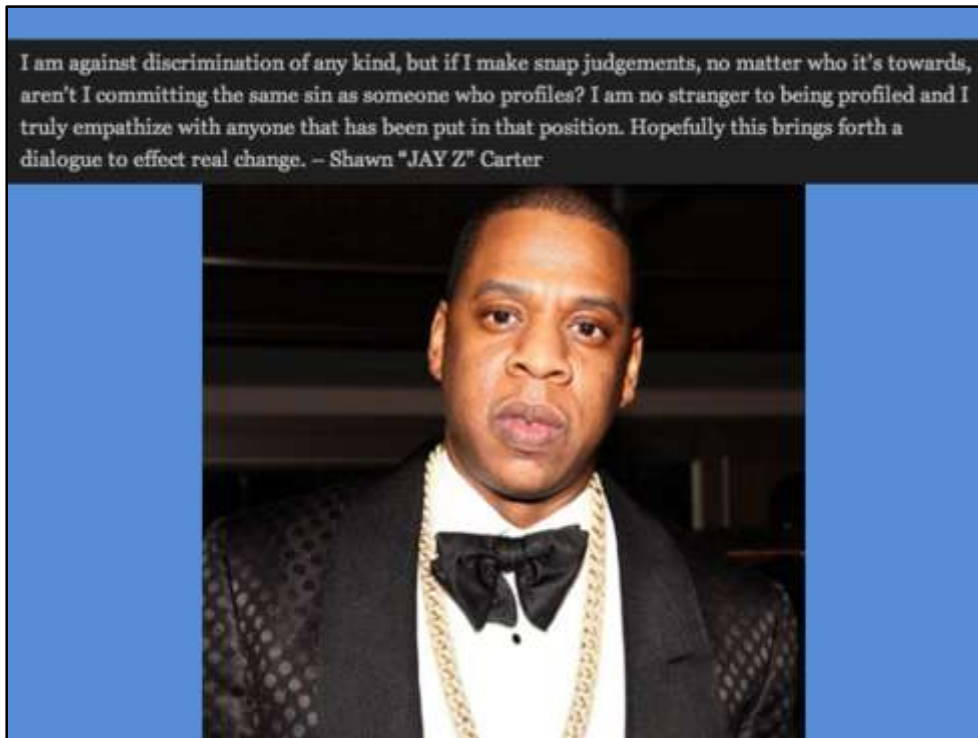
"In both of these instances, no one from Barneys New York raised any issue with these purchases," Mr. Lee said on Tuesday, after emerging from his meeting with Mr. Sharpton in Harlem. "No one from Barneys brought them to the attention of our internal security, and no one from Barneys reached out to external authorities."

The Police Department disputed that account. In both cases, "N.Y.P.D. officers were conducting unrelated investigations and took action based on information brought to their attention by Barneys employees while in the security room," said John J. McCarthy, the department's chief spokesman.

Would you sign the petition?

How do you rate the NYPD spokesman?

I. M. V. A./I. N.



<http://lifeandtimes.com/a-statement-from-shawn-jay-z-carter>

Here is Jay Z's statement on the matter. He says he does not benefit financially from the deal with Barneys—the money goes to his charitable foundation. He urges the public to exercise caution and delay judgment until t

How do you rate the JAY Z?

I. M. V. A./I. N.

he facts are clear.

Evaluate The Source

Aspects of their accounts were supported by Nafeesa Baptiste, a former sales associate of five years, who said she had increasingly found herself and her black customers — some of them well-known musicians and actors — followed by plainclothes security guards “from floor to floor.”

She added that security agents frequently sought copies of receipts, in one case after a substantial cash transaction. “Because I had mostly men of color, it happened often to me,” said Ms. Baptiste, 35.

She quit Barneys last month and has reported workplace harassment to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.



	1 Not at all	2 Somewhat	3 A great deal
Independent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Multiple	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Verified	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Authoritative or Informal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Named	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

ANIMATION: CLICK1= NYS ATTORNEY GENERAL SCHNEIDERMAN; CLICK2= BARNEYS; CLICK3=NYPD SPOKESMAN; CLICK4= FORMER BARNEYS EMPLOYEE. ,MS. BAPTISTE

In the NY Times report we hear from NY State attorney general Eric Schneiderman (pictured top left); spokespersons for Barneys (represented by the storefront, top right); John J. McCarthy, spokesman for the NYPD (represented by the shield bottom left); and former Barneys employee Nafeesa Baptiste (bottom right). Schneiderman says that “shop and frisk” has come to his attention.

A Barneys spokesman says that no one at Barneys called the police to raise issues about the purchases.

The NYPD says that someone at Barneys did contact the department.

Ms. Baptiste says she witnessed, and experienced first-hand, Barneys’ policy of monitoring African American shoppers.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/30/nyregion/black-shoppers-at-barneys-and-macys-say-they-were-profiled-by-security.html?emc=eta1>

http://nypost.com/2013/10/22/barneys-busted-student-for-being-black-suit/?utm_campaign=SocialFlow&utm_source=NYPTwitter&utm_medium=SocialFlow

Do You Have The Facts You Need From Reliable Sources?

	1 Not at all	2 Somewhat	3 A great deal
Independent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Multiple	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Verified	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Authoritative or informed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Named	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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http://nypost.com/2013/10/22/barneys-busted-student-for-being-black-suit/?utm_campaign=SocialFlow&utm_source=NYPTwitter&utm_medium=SocialFlow

Key Lesson:

Evaluate Sources

Evaluate Sources

Evaluate Sources

Does verification trump self-interest? It depends. Does authority outweigh anonymity? Sometimes. Is singularity and anonymity a fatal flaw? It might be. It often frustrates students that there is no formula. But there can't be. The five rules of source evaluation: I.M.V.A/I.N give you a vocabulary with which to make judgments with clarity, but critical thinking is lonely work: you, probing information and Thinking For Yourself.

We may disagree with you in the amount of weight you give to characteristics, but so long as you are evaluating sources and not just taking for granted their weight...you are well on your way to News Literacy, particularly if you begin to demand that your news diet consist of reports built on credible sources.

And as always, this is not some snazzy jargon intended to make you insufferable to your friends and family. Rather, it is a crucial skill in your civic life.

What if You Demand Reliable Sources?



Code of Ethics

Society of News-Literate Citizens

1. Ask: Did the Reporter Open the Freezer?
2. Follow The Story
3. Dismiss Unreliable Sources

Animation: COMPLEX...Slide opens with The SPJ Logo from beginning of lecture. On next click it fades, replaced by a Parody: "Society of News Literate Citizens". On 2nd Click the two Key Lessons come up, proposed as a code of ethics for news consumers.

The lesson of examples like the Sandy Hook Shooter or the Hofstra Rapes or even the invasion of Iraq is you have to follow the news every day. If you don't, your knowledge becomes obsolete...you think we found the WMDs the President told us were the reason for the invasion...you think Ryan was the shooter, when it was his brother Adam.

Your judgment and decisions may rest on obsolete information or falsehoods. Worst of all, you'll re-post or re-tweet falsehoods, polluting the Internet with falsehoods.

Remember the Code of Ethics of Professional Journalists we started the lecture with?

(CLICK)

Imagine a Society of News-Literate Citizens...What would a code of ethics for news consumers look like?

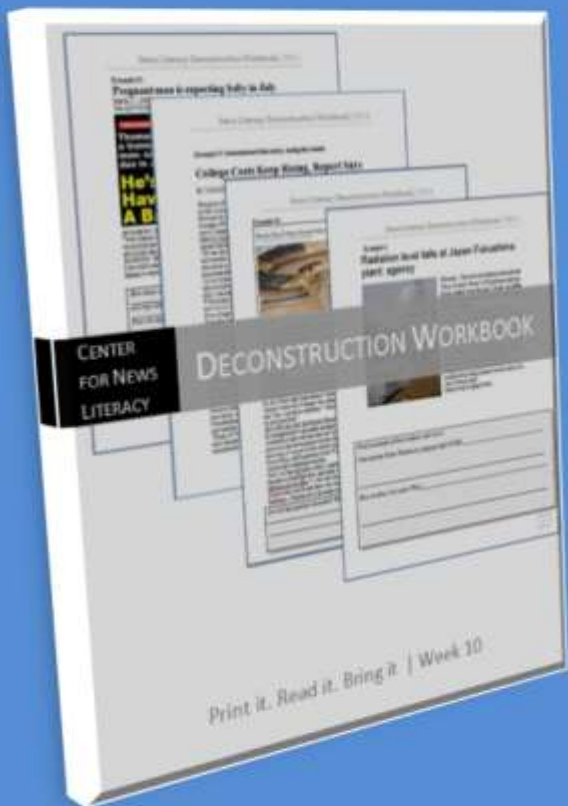
(CLICK)

1. An Ethical News Consumer would pay attention to the evidence behind every story, demanding direct evidence whenever possible by always asking Did the reporter "Open the Freezer?"

2. An Ethical News Consumer would keep up with the news, knowing how the truth changes every day.

3. An Ethical News Consumer would pay close attention to sources, ignoring those who do not measure up, instead of passing along their statements.

Reminder: Bring Deconstruction Workbook to Next Lecture



Print it.

Read it.

Bring it

NEXT WEEK'S LECTURE IS A KIND OF IN-LECTURE WORKSHOP.

YOU MUST BRING THE WORKBOOK TO CLASS

It will be posted on Blackboard and you need to print it out, READ IT, and bring it to class next week.

You'll be asked to summarize the stories in it, so don't plan on reading it in class.

Next week's class is crucial preparation for the

final exam and you will get very little out of it if you do not read the news article examples in the workbook BEFORE class...

Coming Up
Week of Nov. 18-22:

TEST # 2

Covering Lectures 7-12
Same Format as Test #1
Test Will Be Taken in Recitation

After this lecture, students will be able to:

1. Articulate the difference between a news outlet and a news Source.
2. Use the "I.M.V.A.I.N." criteria to evaluate sources in news stories.
3. Justify reasons for differential ratings of sources' credibility based on IMVAIN analysis.
4. Use specific examples to illustrate the difference between a source who asserts and one who verifies.
5. Use a three-part test to judge the reliability of anonymous sources.

These skills relate to course outcomes 1 & 2

This slide intended for instructors as a focusing tool, but can be shared with students to prime them. Each lecture will include a slide like this with specific lecture outcomes that refer to course outcomes.

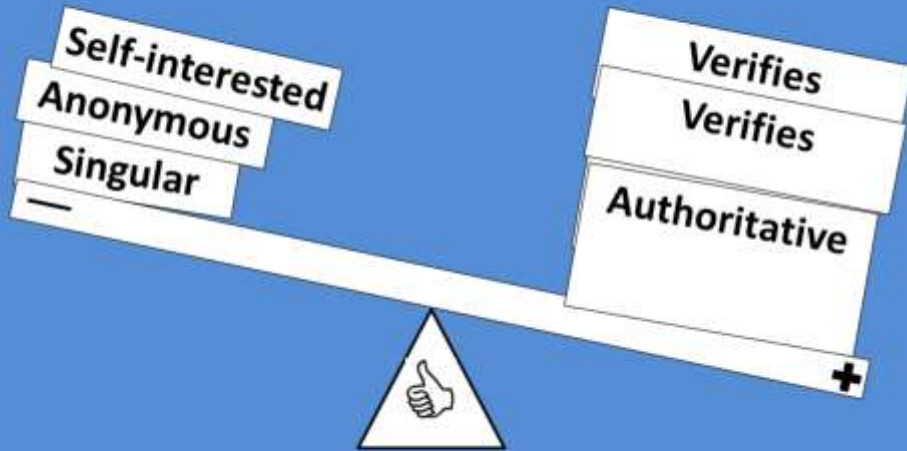
Here is what the syllabus declares students will be able to do if they successfully complete the course:

1. Analyze key elements of news reports - weighing evidence, evaluating sources, noting context and transparency - to judge reliability.
2. Distinguish between journalism, opinion journalism and un-supported bloviation.
3. Identify and distinguish between news media bias and audience bias.
4. Blend personal scholarship and course materials to write forcefully about journalism standards and practices, fairness and bias, First Amendment issues and their individual Fourth Estate rights and responsibilities.
5. Use examples from each day's news to demonstrate critical thinking about civic engagement.
6. Place the impact of social media and digital technologies in their historical context.



hus endeth the Lesson...

Another Way to Rate Sources: Balancing Pros and Cons



Weighing Sources

After Weighing These Sources, What Can You Conclude?

CampDeath.wmv

(NEWS FELLOW LINK VIDEO HERE)

Okay, one more case

As you watch this report, take note of the sources and evidence and start judging the reliability of the report.



Okay, so let's break these down using I M V A/I N.

ASK: **The Mother?**

ASK: **Congressman Miller, the legislative expert?**

ASK: **The State of Texas Investigation?**

ASK: **Government Accountability Office?**

(Congress Proposes director, President appoints to 15-year term)

Evaluate The Sources



When persistent reports circulated in early 2011 that President Obama's trip to India was costing \$200 Million per day, Anderson Cooper went to the source of the information.



COOPER200mIL.WMV

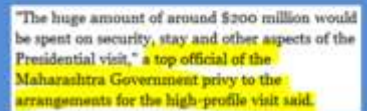
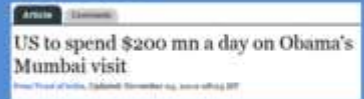
(NEWS FELLOW LINK VIDEO HERE)
(Lecturers: it's a monster. 6 minutes!)
As time permits, we'll work through a series of examples from the news, analyzing the sources immediately after you've heard from them.

This is an Anderson Cooper piece about the cost of President Obama's first trip to India: "200 million a day".
(But , you could stop at the end of Geoff Morrell's remarks, around 4:46)

Sources



Outlets



Let's evaluate the sources in this report. Remember, don't get confused between the Sources in news reports and the Outlets that quote those sources in news reports...



Okay, so let's break these down using I M V A/I N.

ASK: Congresswoman **Michele Bachmann**, R-Minnesota?

ASK: **Robert Gibbs**, then-White House Press Secretary ?

ASK: **Geoff Morrell**, Pentagon Press Spokesman?

ASK: **Congressional Budget Office**?

(House and Senate leaders select director for 4-year term)

ASK: **Government Accountability Office**?

(Congress Proposes director, President appoints to 15-year term)