

# FIVE QUESTIONS TO IDENTIFY RELIABLE SOURCES



**CLOSE UP<sup>®</sup>**  
WASHINGTON DC



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## OVERVIEW



Students will familiarize themselves with the Five Questions to Identify Reliable Media, as identified by the American Press Institute. These questions form the foundation of an analytical approach that both teachers and students should internalize when utilizing media. Students will return to these concepts frequently throughout the Close Up Media Literacy lesson plans and materials. They will serve as a useful anchor point for students to return to when consuming media.

## MATERIALS



Attachment 1: Five Questions to Identify Reliable Media (adapted from the American Press Institute: <https://www.americanpressinstitute.org/publications/six-critical-questions-can-use-evaluate-media-content/>);

Attachment 2: Guided Instruction Article;

Attachment 3: Independent Instruction Article;

Attachment 4: Five Questions to Identify Reliable Media Graphic Organizer;

Attachment 5: Rubric

## TIME



55-60 minutes



## Warm-Up (8-10 minutes)

1. Pose the following question to the class a whole: What makes a source reliable? Ask students to discuss their thoughts in groups and record their responses to be shared with the class. (You may need to offer examples of media, such as newspapers, online articles, blog posts, television clips, etc., to help students think in broad terms about the forms of media that provide information.)
2. Ask students from each group to share out some of their responses and record them at the front of the class on a screen or a piece of poster paper.
3. Be sure to ask students to provide some of the reasoning behind their choice of reliability indicators.

## Introduce the Five Questions to Identify Reliable Media (8-10 minutes)

1. Introduce the Five Questions to Identify Reliable Media from the American Press Institute (Attachment 1).
2. Ask students to review the questions (individually, in groups, or aloud). Emphasize to students that the questions are what they should be asking themselves when they consume any media, particularly when using media to gather information about current events, politics, or world affairs.
3. Post the following questions and ask groups to discuss them:
  - Why would these questions be helpful in identifying a reliable source?
  - How do these questions relate to ideas already listed by the class?
  - Can you think of any types of media to which these questions would not apply? Are there any instances in which they might be less important?
4. Ask students to share out some of their responses.

## Apply the Five Questions to Media (10 minutes)

1. Explain that students will now use the five questions to analyze an article from *The Washington Post*. The link to the original article can be found here: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/immigration/despite-delay-of-ice-raids-immigrant-communities-mobilize-for-roundups/2019/06/23/be8d104e-95e3-11e9-916d-9c61607d8190\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.7edbc55a8a18](https://www.washingtonpost.com/immigration/despite-delay-of-ice-raids-immigrant-communities-mobilize-for-roundups/2019/06/23/be8d104e-95e3-11e9-916d-9c61607d8190_story.html?utm_term=.7edbc55a8a18)
2. Pass out Attachment 2. It may also be beneficial to project the article on a smart board.
3. Choose one of the 5 Questions to highlight as you guide students through the article, focusing their attention on how the question applies to the article's content.
4. Ask students to finish analyzing the rest of the questions, individually or in pairs.
5. **Option:** You can also choose to do this with a clean copy of an article. You can use guided instruction to begin the process, and then have students use the questions to continue analyzing the article.



### **Independent Practice: Applying the Five Questions to Media (20 minutes)**

1. Explain that students will now complete the same process with a new article.
2. Break students into small groups of 3-4 and give each group a copy of Attachment 3. Have students work together to identify different aspects of the article. The original article can be found here: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2019/06/24/fourteen-years-after-it-started-federal-government-has-studied-longest-oil-spill-history/?utm\\_term=.a749fec275ad](https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2019/06/24/fourteen-years-after-it-started-federal-government-has-studied-longest-oil-spill-history/?utm_term=.a749fec275ad)
3. As an additional option, this process can be assigned as homework with a new article.

### **Reflection (10 minutes)**

1. Bring all students back to the whole group.
2. Lead a discussion on the following questions:
  - Why is it important to have a set of questions or criteria for identifying reliable sources?
  - If a source does not meet some of these criteria fully, is it a totally unreliable source, or does it still have some value?
  - Are there any additional criteria you think should be included in this list? Why?
3. Explain that as students continue to interact with media, they can continue to use these characteristics to critically analyze what they are reading, watching, and hearing.

### **Extension Activities**

1. Have small groups of students look at several different types of media (a news article, an op-ed, an analysis article, a work of investigative journalism, etc.). Either have students analyze the article as they did during this lesson plan, or have them use Attachment 4 to record their thoughts. Create mixed groups in which each article is represented and have students compare and contrast each article.
2. Have students examine several articles about the same topic. Use articles from different news sources representing different positions on the ideological or political spectrum. Have students use Attachment 4 to record their findings. Compare and contrast the different articles.

## ATTACHMENT 1: FIVE QUESTIONS TO IDENTIFY RELIABLE MEDIA



<b>TYPE</b>	What kind of content is this? News, opinion, advertisement, entertainment, etc.?
<b>SOURCE</b>	Who and what are the sources cited? What credentials/authority do they have? Why should I believe them?
<b>EVIDENCE</b>	What evidence is presented for the claims made and how is it vetted for accuracy?
<b>INTERPRETATION</b>	To what extent are the key points of the piece supported by the evidence (versus being supported by the author's interpretation of/commentary on the evidence)?
<b>COMPLETENESS</b>	What's missing? Does the piece acknowledge when more information is needed or does it claim to be a definitive source with no possible remaining questions or areas to expand upon?



Type: News Article

**Despite delay of ICE raids, immigrant communities mobilize for roundups**

Maria Sacchetti, Nick Miroff, Rob Kuznia, and Arelis R. Hernandez

*Washington Post*; June 23, 2019

President Trump's decision to postpone the mass arrests of immigrant families with deportation orders offered a two-week reprieve to shaken cities and towns Sunday, but faith and immigration leaders said they will continue to mobilize for roundups in case talks between the White House and congressional Democrats break down.

After Trump threatened raids a week ago, immigrant rights groups in Chicago, Washington, New York, and nationwide publicized emergency hotlines, alerted volunteers, and hastily arranged gatherings to teach immigrants what to do if an agent knocks on their door — efforts that are ongoing since the president called off the raids Saturday. The arrests were set to begin Sunday.

"We're ready. We're going to be vigilant," said Richard Morales, director of the immigrant rights campaign for Faith in Action, a national faith-based network in more than 20 states. "Whether it happens today or it happens in two weeks, our congregation, our clergy, they're ready to respond."

Trump said Democrats pushed him to postpone the raids as they work toward a possible deal on overhauling the nation's asylum laws and emergency spending legislation to provide an additional \$4.5 billion, mostly for the Departments of Health and Human Services and Homeland Security to deal with a record surge of Central American families and unaccompanied minors at the southern border.

Source: Director of a group that works directly on the issue at hand, and the organization works in multiple states

Evidence: Why President Trump is seeking to implement a policy



A flier that reads "Human Rights Watch Home, ICE Free Zone" at the meeting in Chicago on Wednesday. (AP Photo/Amr Alfiky) (Amr Alfiky/AP)

But the president also is seeking greater power to detain and deport migrant families and unaccompanied minors who cross the border illegally and seek asylum, because most are quickly released in the United States to await a court hearing and are rarely deported.

Advocates say families and children are fleeing violence, hunger, and poverty, but Trump has said that “loopholes” in asylum laws are fueling the surge and that he is willing to wield his leverage to pry concessions from Democrats. He secured tougher enforcement measures from Mexico this month after threatening to impose tariffs on their exports.

“I want to give the Democrats every last chance to quickly negotiate simple changes to Asylum and Loopholes,” Trump tweeted Sunday. “This will fix the Southern Border, together with the help that Mexico is now giving us. Probably won’t happen, but worth a try. Two weeks and big Deportation begins!”

Trump promised to deport millions of undocumented immigrants from the United States during his 2016 campaign, but since then, he has largely fixated on the soaring crossings at the border. Interior arrests are down, but border apprehensions have been on track to hit 1 million this year, the highest numbers in more than a decade.

Trump’s threats jarred immigrant communities nationwide in recent days.

In the Washington area, five church congregations readied to offer sanctuary to immigrants facing deportation, and advocates lined up volunteers to take their children to doctors’ appointments or summer school.

In Chicago, workers canvassed immigrant neighborhoods handing out informational cards, accompanied by the new mayor, Lori Lightfoot, who told local media she had a message for Trump: “Back off.”

In downtown Los Angeles on Sunday, about 125 immigrant rights protesters gathered for a rally outside of a hulking six-story immigrant detention center holding signs that said “stop separating families.”

Speaking through a microphone, Melody Klingenfuss of the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA) broadcast tips on what to do if Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents knock on their doors. Record the raids with their phones. Don’t offer false documents.

Fifteen-year-old Jair Solis, who spoke at the rally, said ICE agents had knocked on their door four months ago, and the family had refused to answer. But they soon found Solis’s 43-year-old father as he left in his car for his job as a supervisor of a cleaning company. They took him to a detention center. CHIRLA paid his \$5,000 bail, but Solis said his father lost his job.

Now, the Mexican national is trying to get his citizenship through the court process. Solis said he is optimistic.

“It’s just a long process,” he said. “My mom has been in the process for 20 years.”

As the raids loomed over the weekend, unconfirmed reports of immigration arrests from Arizona to Washington ricocheted across social media.

Source: Comments from President Trump taken from his official Twitter account

Evidence: Identifies the issue the president is attempting to address, and uses past comments as evidence of his ongoing commitment to the issue

Evidence: Supports the interpretation in the previous paragraphs that immigrant communities were “jarred” and “rattled” by the president’s announcement

Source: The article cites several people (Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot is a government official, Melody Klingenfuss works for an organization that provides support to immigrants, and Jair Solis is a person directly impacted by the issue)

Evidence: Each source provides a different perspective on the issue, and how this issue is impacting immigrant communities

Evidence: Information from social media, but the information is unconfirmed

In Washington, immigrant advocates spent the day trying to confirm details of possible arrests in Adams Morgan and Columbia Heights.

Community members called hotlines set up to receive reports of raids by ICE and dispatch volunteers into the communities to record and observe the arrests. But nobody could confirm the names of anyone who has been arrested.

Immigration officials declined to say whether they arrested anyone over the weekend.

A DHS official, speaking on the condition of anonymity because the person was not authorized to discuss the operation, said another routine ICE operation known as “Cross Check,” which targets migrants with criminal convictions, has been ongoing for several weeks. However, they have only netted a few hundred arrests so far, because immigrants are rarely found at the addresses they provide to authorities.

“People know we’re coming,” the DHS official said.

Trump’s decision to telegraph the family raids in a tweet one week ago exacerbated fissures among DHS leaders over the scope and timing of the plan.

On Saturday, as state and local officials in several jurisdictions denounced the plan — and their police departments eschewed cooperation — former ICE director Tom Homan and anonymous senior officials accused acting DHS Secretary Kevin McAleenan of leaking details of the operation to get the White House to call it off.

But officials at several Homeland Security agencies had privately expressed concern all week that the operation had been fatally compromised by Trump’s announcement that the roundups would begin “next week.”

His announcement followed weeks of public statements by newly installed acting ICE chief Mark Morgan that his agency was preparing to arrest thousands of families in major U.S. cities who have failed to comply with deportation orders that were fast-tracked through an expedited Justice Department court docket.

Up to 1,000 detention beds had been set aside at a federal family detention center in Dilley, Tex., for the raids, according to the DHS official.

The - began receiving anonymous tips with details of the operation two days after the president’s tweet, and by the end of the week, those plans were circulating among officials at multiple agencies, as well as legislative staffers and legal-aid organizations for immigrants.

Homan, whom Trump has courted to serve as a “border czar,” said Sunday that the president should move forward with the raids in two weeks if they do not reach a deal with Democrats.

“I think if the president, if he doesn’t get something meaningful, I think ICE is going to do it and they should do it,” Homan said.

Completeness: This is a missing perspective in the article; the authors were not able to confirm if any arrests were made

Source: An anonymous government official

Knowledge: No official statement was made by any of the government agencies who are directly working on the issue (What is their official position? What actions are they taking or not taking?)

Source: Former ICE director, someone who is knowledgeable on the issue

Evidence: The information supports the claim that President Trump intended to begin raids; the evidence comes directly from the agency in charge of housing undocumented immigrants



**The U.S. government has studied the longest oil spill in history – 14 years after the leak began**

By Darryl Fears  
June 24, 2019

***Washington Post***

The federal government's first study of the nearly 15-year-long oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico estimates that up to 108 barrels per day — more than 4,500 gallons — is flowing from a site where an oil company's platform and wells were destroyed during a hurricane.

Monday's report, by two scientists at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and a Florida State University professor, joined several others in disputing the company's claim that only one drop of oil per minute is being released from a small area covered in mud, amounting to less than three gallons each day.

"The results of this study contradict these conclusions by the Taylor Energy Company," the authors said. The government's findings also differ from those of three studies last year that said the flow of oil from the site was substantially higher.

Geoscientist Oscar Garcia-Pineda estimated that between 250 and 700 barrels per day — up to 29,000 gallons — are flowing into the gulf. University of South Florida marine scientist Shaojie Sun determined that between 50 and 1,700 barrels per day — up to 71,400 gallons — were pouring from the site.

Even one of the federal report's authors — Ian MacDonald, the Florida State professor — estimated that nearly 150 barrels, about 6,300 gallons, spilled from the site that Taylor Energy once leased in an underwater canyon 12 miles off the coast of Louisiana. The other authors were NOAA scientists Andrew L. Mason and J. Christopher Taylor.

In an interview, Mason and Taylor said they were approached by the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement, a division of the Interior Department, to conduct an independent government assessment of oil flowing from the site.

The study concludes that the oil and gas releases at the site are coming from multiple wells, contradicting Taylor Energy's explanation that it's rising from oil-soaked sediment.

The next step, according to a NOAA statement that announced the study, is to conduct a Natural Resource Damage Assessment that “assesses injuries to natural resources and then determines the best methods to rehabilitate, replace” the benefits those resources provided.

NOAA and its federal partners are in the early stages of the process to assess damages “to determine if public natural resources have been harmed by the oil and gas release.” An assessment of harm related to the BP oil spill in 2010 led to fines.

Hurricane Ivan caused 80-foot waves that led to the walls of the canyon giving way, resulting in a mudslide that chopped down Taylor Energy’s oil platform in 2004. The event buried the broken wells under more than 100 feet of sediment.

According to early federal estimates, the sediment is saturated with 97,000 to 346,000 gallons of oil.

Although the company called the event an “act of God” that was unprecedented, the study said a similar event happened during Hurricane Camille in 1969. Eleven years later, a report commissioned by the Interior Department identified areas in the gulf that were susceptible to mudslides.

Mississippi Canyon 20, the site of Taylor Energy’s platform, was one of those areas.

Asked why it took the bureau more than 14 years to commission the study of a spill that started in 2004, Mason and Taylor said they did not know and could not speak on the bureau’s behalf.

Normally this type of assessment takes at least two years, but the bureau wanted it done in less than one, Mason said. So for seven days starting Sept. 1, the three scientists focused solely on studying the oil and not its effects on marine life and the environment.

They used two methodologies and two devices to measure oil bubbling out of a pit created by the disaster, where a tangle of pipes and Taylor Energy’s 28 wells are still releasing crude.

A new device called a bubblometer allowed them to film and count oil and gas coming out of the pit. An acoustic device allowed them to estimate the flux rate of oil and gas plumes rising from the ocean floor.

Based on the acoustic survey, the scientists estimated that nine to 47 barrels of oil per day — up to 1,974 gallons — were rising out of the erosion pit in 450 feet of water. But according to the bubblometer, 19 to 108 barrels per day were pouring from the site.

Mason called the estimates conservative because they could not account for smaller eruptions of oil that took place beyond the scope of their investigation. Mason and Taylor said there were micro pits within the larger pit that emitted oil and gas.

In their report, Mason, Taylor and MacDonald noted that all estimates “were higher than the amounts reported by Taylor Energy Company.” Because of the persistent oil sheen and gas plumes, the scientists wrote, a government analysis was needed to complement previous observations. Taylor Energy has disputed every outside assessment of oil flowing from the site.

# ATTACHMENT 4: FIVE QUESTIONS TO IDENTIFY RELIABLE MEDIA GRAPHIC ORGANIZER



Publication:	Date Published:	Author:
Headline:		
Below are five questions that you should ask yourself when you examine a media source. As you read the article, answer each question and be sure to provide support for your answer.		
<b>Type:</b> What kind of content is this? News, opinion, advertisement, entertainment, etc.? How can you tell?		
<b>Source:</b> Who and what are the sources cited? What credentials/ authority do they have? Why should I believe them?		
<b>Evidence:</b> What evidence is presented for the claims made and how is it vetted for accuracy?		
<b>Interpretation:</b> To what extent are the key points of the piece supported by the evidence (versus being supported by the author's interpretation of/commentary on the evidence)?		
<b>Completeness:</b> What's missing? Does the piece acknowledge when more information is needed, or does it claim to be a definitive source with no possible remaining questions or areas to expand upon?		



# ATTACHMENT 5: RUBRIC FOR ANALYZING A NEWS SOURCE



	3	2	1
<b>Type</b>	Correctly identifies the type of source and offers logical reasoned support	Correctly identifies the type of source	Incorrectly identifies the type of source
<b>Source</b>	Identifies main sources of information AND the credentials/expertise of those sources AND justifies why each source should or should not be believed	Identifies main sources of information AND the credentials/expertise of those sources OR justifies why each source should or should not be believed	Identifies sources without explaining their expertise or justifying why each source should or should not be believed
<b>Evidence</b>	Lists evidence AND addresses how the author vetted that evidence for accuracy	Lists evidence without addressing how the author vetted that evidence for accuracy	Gives an incomplete list of evidence
<b>Interpretation</b>	Offers an opinion on the quality of interpretation AND offers full justification for that opinion	Offers an opinion on the quality of interpretation AND offers some justification for that opinion	Offers an opinion on the quality of interpretation WITHOUT justifying that opinion
<b>Completeness</b>	Clearly identifies missing information, perspectives, or evidence AND explains why the missing items are important AND evaluates whether or not the author acknowledges the gaps in their information	Clearly identifies missing information, perspectives, or evidence AND explains why the missing items are important OR evaluates whether or not the author acknowledges the gaps in their information	Clearly identifies missing information, perspectives, or evidence