

Boost Free Lessons - Year 8 English

Lesson 12: Reliable Sources

Name: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____

Worked Example 1

Which of these sources is more reliable, and why?

A. A study published by a university medical school.

B. A blog post titled "The truth they don't want you to know".

1. Ask four questions of any source: who wrote it, when, why, and can it be checked.
2. Source A names an institution with expertise, and academic work is reviewed before publication.
3. Source B names no author and no evidence, and the title appeals to suspicion rather than proof.
4. Claiming that information is being hidden is a warning sign, not a qualification.

Source A. It has identifiable expertise and is subject to review, while B offers no author, evidence or way to check its claims.

Worked Example 2

What is wrong with the claim below?

Studies show that students who use this app improve by 40 per cent.

1. *Studies show* names no study, so there is nothing to check.
2. Improve by 40 per cent in what, measured how, and compared with whom? The claim is unmeasurable.
3. Ask who benefits. If the app company funded the research, that is a conflict of interest.
4. A reliable claim names its source, its method and its date.

The claim names no study, defines no measurement, and does not say who funded the research.

Remember: Ask four questions of every source: **who** wrote it, **when**, **why**, and can it be **checked**. Beware claims like *studies show* that never name the study.



Question 1: Write whether each source is likely to be **reliable** or **unreliable**.

1. A government statistics website

2. An anonymous social media post

3. A peer-reviewed scientific journal

4. An advertisement for the product being discussed

5. A newspaper article that names its sources

6. A website with no date and no author

7. An encyclopedia entry with listed references

8. A forum comment beginning "I heard that"



Question 2: Read the passage below, then answer the questions.

According to the Bureau of Statistics, screen use among teenagers rose steadily between 2019 and 2023. A recent survey found that most parents are concerned. Everyone knows this is damaging concentration, and research funded by a leading software company confirms it.

1. Which claim in the passage is best supported? Explain.

2. Which claim is least supported? Explain.

3. What important information is missing about the survey?

4. Why does it matter who funded the research?

5. Write one question you would ask before accepting the final claim.



Question 3: Answer the following questions.

1. List four questions you should ask about any source.

2. Explain why an old source may be unreliable even if it was accurate once.

3. Why is a source that names its own limitations often more trustworthy?





Every student has gaps. The hard part is knowing exactly where they are.
That is what a Boost assessment is for.

Book a Free Assessment

Normally valued at \$199, free for new families

- A friendly skills check aligned to the NSW syllabus
- Face to face with our qualified tutors
- A clear picture of your child's strengths and gaps
- A weekly plan built around what they actually need

Book a Free Assessment →

boosttutoring.com.au/contact



Answers: Reliable Sources**Question 1**

1. Reliable
2. Unreliable
3. Reliable
4. Unreliable
5. Reliable
6. Unreliable
7. Reliable
8. Unreliable

Question 2

1. Model: the figure attributed to the Bureau of Statistics, because the source is named and can be checked.
2. Model: *everyone knows*, because it names nobody and cannot be verified.
3. How many people were surveyed, when, where, and how they were selected.
4. An organisation that profits from a particular result has an interest in finding it, which does not prove the research wrong but means it needs independent checking.
5. Model: Who carried out the survey, and how many people took part?

Question 3

1. Who wrote it and what is their expertise? When was it published? Why was it written, and does the author benefit? Can the claims be checked against another source?
2. Facts change. Population figures, technology, laws and medical advice all date, so a source that was accurate in 2005 may be misleading now.
3. Naming limitations shows the author is describing what the evidence actually supports rather than overstating it, which suggests they are being honest about the rest.

