



Skill Focus: Evaluating Information	Learning Objective: Introduce students to lateral reading as a method for evaluating sources.
Duration: 50 minutes	Learning Outcome(s): Students will understand how lateral reading can help them evaluate sources, what SIFT stands for, and be able to apply the SIFT method to evaluate popular sources.

Lesson Plan: Vertical reading is evaluating the credibility of a single source by staying within the text/website. This means taking the information or claims at face value. The SIFT method (Stop, Investigate the source, Find better coverage, Trace claims) is designed to introduce students to lateral reading. Lateral reading encourages students to verify information across multiple sources and to look for the original source of information. This method is particularly useful for students when they find a news article or content about the news. Lateral reading can also lead students to more appropriate sources for their information need.

Introduction to Lateral Reading (20 minutes)

- ⇒ Use the PowerPoint provided to walk students through lateral reading and the SIFT Method.
- ⇒ Engage students by asking what they think makes a source “good.” You can do this as a verbal activity, use Poll Everywhere, Mentimeter, or another program.
 - Common answers include the date, author’s authority, bias, and website domain (.com, .org, .edu).
 - This will give you an idea of how students look at and vertically analyze their sources.
- ⇒ Using the PowerPoint, go through the role of each letter in SIFT and questions students should think about for each letter.
- ⇒ There is a video embedded in the PowerPoint. Have students watch from :52-2:40 and 3:00-7:21. This video introduces lateral reading (Investigating the source).
- ⇒ For finding better coverage, talk about appropriate sources for their current assignment, if they have one. What types of sources do they need? Are there types of information they should not be using for their assignment? This is where SIFT can help find better coverage and trace claims back to the original source.

Lateral Reading Activity (20 minutes)

- ⇒ Choose an article from a news source. This might be related to what you’ve been discussing in class, related to your field, or any interesting article to engage students. There is an example article in the PowerPoint. Add a short link or QR code to the PowerPoint so students can navigate to the original source.

- For your chosen news article, identify some additional sources of information and the original source of information. Add them to the PowerPoint. There is an example in the slides.
- ⇒ Divide students into groups of 2-3 and have them complete the attached worksheet.
 - In this activity, students are going to practice lateral reading.
 - When laterally reading, students should look for new information not in the article, similar claims and consensus from other articles they found about this news story, and then trace the information back to the original journal article it came from.
- ⇒ Walk around the room and check in with students, note their progress, common issues across the groups, and guide students if they get stuck during this process.

Discussion and Wrap-up (10 minutes)

- ⇒ Review the worksheet as a class. Discuss the purpose of the original article.
 - The original news article was written for the general public and simplified complex scientific research to make it more accessible to non-experts.
- ⇒ Use the PowerPoint to go through the next questions.
- ⇒ Through this activity, students should be able to identify additional sources, if the sources confirm the information in the original article, and if there is a more appropriate source for their information need than the original article.
- ⇒ Wrap up with the last slide to go over information students should remember when verifying claims and evaluating information.

Connection to TAMU Student Learning Outcomes

- ⇒ Critical thinking, including the ability to evaluate, analyze, and integrate information from a variety of sources.
- ⇒ Exhibit the skills necessary to acquire, organize, reorganize, and interpret new knowledge.

Notes:

- ⇒ The [SIFT \(The Four Moves\)](#) method was developed by [Mike Caulfield](#).



Evaluating Sources: Reading Laterally

1. What type of source is this? _____
2. Read this article vertically. What information did you find out about this source?

3. Do some lateral reading for this article. What new information did you find about this source?

4. Did you find similar claims in other articles? Where? What is the general consensus from these sources?

5. What is the title of the original research/journal article that they are referring to in this article? How did you find it?
