

Online Information: Fact or Fiction?

Grade: 9-12

Subject: Social Studies, Communications

Duration: One - two lessons

Objectives

It is expected that students will:

- Use efficient strategies for locating, recording, and organizing research information from a variety of sources
- Compare and analyze different presentations of the same ideas and issues
- Demonstrate an appreciation of how their experiences and their membership in communities influence their interpretations of what they read, view, and hear.

Overview and Background

The *Conservation in Action* website presents information about some of Canada's endangered species. This activity encourages students to critically examine online sources of information about conservation issues, and reflect on their response to the information presented.

Procedures

Part 1 – Different Points of View

Students:

1. Brainstorm criteria for determining whether information presented on the Internet is accurate and reliable.
2. Search the Internet for two sources that present different points of view or give conflicting information about the same conservation topic (e.g., fish farming, whale hunting, marine protected areas, dolphin-friendly tuna, sonar testing in the ocean)
3. Summarize and critique the two pieces and judge their accuracy and reliability using the criteria you developed in Step 1.

Part 2 – Critiquing *Conservation in Action*

Students:

1. Evaluate the *Conservation in Action* website using the *Website Critique* handout.

Materials and Resources

- Computer and Internet connection
- *Website Critique* handout

Extensions

Find stories about conservation issues presented by the mainstream news media. Discuss whether or not the reporters present balanced stories about conservation topics.

Evaluation

Use the following criteria to assess student work during the lesson.

To what extent does the student:	
1. Respond to questions with clear, relevant information	5 4 3 2 1 0
2. Outline the reasoned argument which led to his/her conclusions	5 4 3 2 1 0
3. Use illustrative examples	5 4 3 2 1 0
4. Identify key groups and their different points of view	5 4 3 2 1 0
5. Locate relevant information from a variety of sources	5 4 3 2 1 0
6. Provide accurate references for sources used	5 4 3 2 1 0

Website Critique

1. Who created the *Conservation in Action* website?
2. In your opinion, is the *Conservation in Action* website a reliable source? Explain your reasoning.
3. What do you think the people who created this website are trying to communicate?
4. Do you think that this website is achieving its goals? Why or why not?
5. Describe any prior experiences you have had with the three animals featured on this website: killer whales, Steller sea lions and rockfish (e.g. movies/documentaries, books, news/magazine articles, stories, wildlife viewing, fishing trips, encounters, conversations, etc).
6. Do your experiences (or lack of experiences) with these animals influence how you interpret the information presented on this website?
7. Do you feel that the conservation of these animals is important to your local community? To other Canadian communities? To Canada as a whole? Why or why not?