Read It Together

Where Was It Written Down?

What a source is, what only looks like one, and the most useful sentence in research

Plate 2 left you with a confident wrong answer and an account of why it happened. This plate answers the question that follows. So how would I know?

The skill is verification. The lesson is built to make one outcome respectable. Looking carefully, finding nothing, and saying so.

Step 1 · The starter · 5 min

Which one is true, and how would we know?

Put the confident wrong answer from plate 2 on the board as a claim. Beside it, a true claim on the same subject.

Ask which is true. Then the real question: how would we know, without asking anyone in the room how sure they feel?

The answer is a definition. A source: a place where a fact was recorded by someone in a position to know, and who can be named.

Step 2 · Whole class · 10 min

The four moves

Say the claim precisely. Find the prepared source. Compare. Record where you found it.

Do them slowly and name each one. This is the template for the pair work.

Step 3 · Pairs · 15 min

Five cards, three verdicts

Each pair takes a claim. The set is mixed on purpose: two true and easy to source, one false and easy to disprove, one true but hard to source with what is in the room, and one produced by a chat model, complete with a plausible citation.

Three lines: the claim restated; what you found and where; a verdict. Confirmed, contradicted, or could not find a source.

> **Do this together**
>
> "Could not find a source" is a full-credit verdict. A source that is "the internet" is not a source. A verdict without the restated claim has not met the outcome.

What only looks like evidence

Agreement is not a source

Each of these feels like confirmation. None of them records anything.

> Someone might say: Everybody knows that.
>
> **Agreement is not evidence. Where was it recorded, and by whom?**

> Someone might say: It has a million views.
>
> **Popularity measures attention, not truth.**

> Someone might say: I asked the model again and it confirmed it.
>
> **That is the same prediction run twice. A second guess, not a second opinion.**

Plenary · 10 min

The citation that does not exist

Ask the pair with the model's claim what happened when they looked for its source. Usually it is not there.

Why would a machine that predicts likely words produce a likely-looking citation for a source that does not exist? The class has the answer from plate 1.

Then have the hard-to-source pair read their verdict aloud, and treat it as the best answer in the room.

Next · Plate 4

Whose words are these?

From claims about the world to claims about work. The same habit applies. Say precisely what was done, and by whom.

For the adult in the room

Notes

Two failures, in opposite directions. "Everybody knows", which treats agreement or popularity as evidence, and checking the machine against the machine, which treats a repeated prediction as confirmation.

Model "I could not find a source for that" yourself, out loud, at least once. Students learn to say it by watching an adult say it without embarrassment.

Decide the class claim and its source in advance, and prepare the five cards. The hard-to-source card should stay hard.