

LESSON 3

Questions for Evaluating Sources

FOUNDATIONS OF THE RESTORATION TEACHER MATERIAL

1. What are the qualifications, intentions, and possible biases of the author?

President Dallin H. Oaks of the First Presidency taught that we should “be cautious about the motivation of the one who provides information.

... Our personal decisions should be based on information from sources that are qualified on the subject and free from selfish motivations” (Dallin H. Oaks, “Truth and the Plan,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2018, 25).

2. How closely connected is the author to the events being described?

When a source addresses something from Church history, ask yourself how far removed the source is from the event it is discussing. Stories based on second- or thirdhand accounts are often less reliable.

3. Does the author intentionally ignore available evidence in order to mislead?

Some authors deliberately omit important facts and ignore critical evidence to support their particular point of view.

4. Are the teachings and events addressed in this source presented in the proper context of their time, place, and circumstance?

Some teachings and historical events can become confusing when they are taken out of the context of their time and place. Historical context also includes other events happening at the time (such as wars, economic crises, and social and political movements) and the culture and demographics of a given time and setting.

5. Are the teachings and events supported by additional reliable sources?

Support from other reliable sources helps establish the accuracy of doctrine and historical events.

