

Building a Shared Collection of Bookmarks

Today in class, we will use Diigo to build a shared collection of bookmarks that focus on the controversial issue that we are studying in class. Each class will have a different role to play in building our shared collection. Please find the directions for your class below.

Class 1: Bookmark sites that provide general information about the controversial issue that we are studying.

Your job is to search for *reliable* news sites that give a general overview of the controversial issue that we are studying. You should be on the lookout for sites that answer the basic questions that good news articles answer:

- **Who** is involved in this controversial issue?
- **What** are the important details that people need to know about this controversial issue?
- **Where** is this controversial issue taking place?
- **When** is this controversial issue taking place?
- **Why** were key decisions in this controversial issue made?

You should *not* bookmark websites that share too many opinions or that take a clear stand in favor of or against the controversial issue that we are studying.

In the comment section of your bookmark, please answer the following questions:

- What makes this article useful to readers? Is it written in language that other students will understand? Does it include an interesting video or graphics?
- What do you know about the author of the article? Why do you think we can trust what they are telling us?

Class 2: Bookmark sites that share reasons why the controversial issue is a *bad idea*.

Your job is to search for sources that explain why the controversial issue we are studying is a bad idea. The sites that you are looking for will definitely be sharing opinions—but remember that the best opinions are backed up by evidence.

While reading, be on the lookout for:

- **Statistics**—Evidence expressed in numbers or percentages
- **Star statements**—Quotes from experts (doctors, nurses, college professors, politicians, parents, store owners) who believe that the controversial issue is a bad idea
- **Stories**—The experiences of one individual with the controversial issue

In the comment section of your bookmark, please answer the following questions:

- What is the most convincing bit of evidence in this article? Why do you think that evidence is so convincing?
- What do you know about the author of the article? Why do you think we can trust what he or she is telling us?

- What do you know about the website that the article is posted on? Why do you think we can trust the content posted on this website?

Class 3: Bookmark sites that share reasons why the controversial issue is a *good idea*.

Your job is to search for sources that explain why the controversial issue we are studying is a good idea. The sites that you are looking for will definitely be sharing opinions—but remember that the best opinions are backed up by evidence.

While reading, be on the lookout for:

- **Statistics**—Evidence expressed in numbers or percentages
- **Star statements**—Quotes from experts (doctors, nurses, college professors, politicians, parents, store owners) who believe that the controversial issue is a good idea
- **Stories**—The experiences of one individual with the controversial issue

In the comment section of your bookmark, please answer the following questions:

- What is the most convincing bit of evidence in this article? Why do you think that evidence is so convincing?
- What do you know about the author of the article? Why do you think we can trust what he or she is telling us?
- What do you know about the website that the article is posted on? Why do you think we can trust the content posted on this website?

Class 4: Evaluate the bookmarks added to our shared collection by earlier classes.

Your job is to find an article that is already in our shared collection and determine (1) whether it is worthwhile and (2) whether it is believable.

While judging whether your article is worthwhile, ask yourself the following questions:

- Will other students find this article easy to read, or is it written for older readers? Why?
- Is this article easy on the eyes? Are there graphics (videos or pictures) to look at? Are the paragraphs short, or are they really long? If another middle schooler lands on this page, will he want to read on or will he be too intimidated by what the page looks like to want to read any further?
- Does this article have links to other articles about the controversial issue that we are studying that readers can explore?

While judging whether your article is believable, ask yourself the following questions:

- Does the author of this article share enough evidence in the article to make a strong case or does it seem like the author is doing nothing more than sharing his or her opinion without backing it up with supporting details?
- Does the author of this article seem like an expert that is worth trusting? Is there enough information about the author and about the website that the article appears on to make them believable?

- Is there anything about this article, this author, or this website that seems suspicious or that makes you skeptical? What (if anything) do you doubt about this article, this author, or this website?

After exploring your website, please add a comment in our classroom group that answers the following questions:

- On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is the worst and 5 is the best, how worthwhile is the website that you were evaluating? Explain the reasons behind your rating.
- On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is the worst and 5 is the best, how believable is the website that you were evaluating? Explain the reasons behind your rating.
- Would you recommend this article to a friend who wanted to learn more about the controversial issue that we are studying? Why, or why not?