



Preparing to vote

ACTIVITY



60 minutes
approximately

Information sources under the microscope

In this activity, voters in training will exercise their critical thinking skills and analyze the reliability of various sources of information using a grid.

OBJECTIVES

Analyze the reliability of sources of information using a grid

Develop critical thinking skills

SUBJECTS

Culture and citizenship in Québec

French

English

MATERIAL REQUIRED

- ✓ PowerPoint presentation [*Information sources under the microscope*](#) (optional)
- ✓ Note sheets or sticky notes (Post-it notes)
- ✓ Copies of the *Grid for analyzing the reliability of a source of information*
- ✓ Copies of the *Scenarios* activity sheet
- ✓ Copies of the Voters in Training activity sheet
- ✓ Copy of the *Answer key for the facilitator* sheet

SUGGESTED STEPS

To get started

Start the discussion with students by asking the following question:

- Where do you look for information on a topic that interests you?

Invite students to write down as many sources of information as they can on a note sheet or sticky note in one minute.

Bring the group back together to summarize the students' responses and draw parallels with searching for information in an electoral context (candidates, elections, and current events).

Variant: Invite students to come to the front of the class to post their sticky notes, grouping them by type of information.

1. Present the information found in the "A bit of theory" section below to students, making connections with the sources of information they named.
2. Present the *Grid for analyzing the reliability of a source of information* to students.
3. Tell the voters in training that they will need to work in teams to analyze the reliability of sources of information in various scenarios.
4. Model the analysis activity using scenario no. 1 and the activity sheet.

Note: For the modelling to be effective, it is important to think aloud and express everything that comes to mind as you read through the scenario (reactions, emotions, ideas, and questions). It is also helpful to explain the connections you draw between the information presented and your line of thinking. These practices support the development of critical thinking in students.

5. Divide students into teams of three and invite them to designate a note keeper and a spokesperson.
6. Distribute to each team:
 - one copy of the Voters in Training activity sheet;
 - one copy of the Scenarios sheet per student.
7. Tell the teams which scenario they need to analyze and let them know they have five minutes to complete the analysis grid.

Information sources under the microscope

- 8.** Debrief the entire group and:
 - A.** ask the spokesperson to share their team's analysis conclusion, that is, the traffic light colour and the action or actions selected;
 - B.** ask the other teams to indicate their own conclusion by raising their hand to show the traffic light colour they selected. You may ask certain teams to explain their answer;
 - C.** supplement the information as needed using the *Answer key for the facilitator sheet*.
- 9.** Repeat the steps described above for the remaining scenarios.
- 10.** Invite the voters in training to share what they learned through this activity and let them know they can use the analysis grid in any information-seeking context.

A BIT OF THEORY**Getting informed before voting**

In a democracy, the population elects representatives. Their role is to make decisions that impact society as a whole.

Even though young people do not yet vote in official elections, learning how to find information and verify the reliability of sources prepares them to participate responsibly, including during an electoral simulation and, later, when they have the right to vote.

During an election campaign, to form your own opinion on the different candidates and make an informed choice when voting, it is essential to follow the debates and find out what the political parties and candidates are proposing.

Develop critical thinking skills

No matter where you look for information, you should exercise caution because there is a lot of false or misleading information out there. With the Internet and social media, false and misleading information spreads even more easily and can be read or heard quickly by large numbers of people.

Information sources under the microscope

Disinformation and misinformation

This information comes from a variety of sources. It can be spread unintentionally or intentionally.

- We speak of **disinformation** when false information is spread **deliberately, with malicious intent**, in order to harm individuals or organizations.
- We speak of **misinformation** when false information is spread **by mistake**, due to a lack of knowledge or because a person did not verify whether content was accurate before sharing it.

Primary or secondary information

A source is considered **primary** if it presents direct or first-hand information that has not been analyzed or rephrased by another person. This is the case, for example, with raw data, research results consulted directly, and the testimony of a person providing information about themselves.

A source is considered **secondary** if it reports, summarizes, or analyzes information that comes from other sources. This is the case, for example, with news medium: journalists cite sources of information (statements, statistics, etc.) in their news story.

Note: in news medium, news story presenting facts appear alongside opinion content. Analysts shed light on current events, editorial writers convey their outlet's position on certain topics, and columnists share their own point of view.

Artificial intelligence

“AI is short for **Artificial Intelligence**.

Artificial Intelligence is a technology that imitates human intelligence. It allows computers to perform tasks such as learning, reasoning and decision-making.”

Source: Alloprof (n.d.). Artificial Intelligence, consulted June 18, 2026.

www.alloprof.qc.ca/en/students/vl/sciences/artificial-intelligence-elementary-0-i0022p56.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is used in many fields and is playing an increasingly large role in our lives. But is it a good idea to use AI to find information? Not necessarily. Even if the results seem convincing, AI is often wrong. If you use AI to conduct research, it is best to exercise caution and always verify the generated responses against reliable sources.

Process for analyzing the reliability of a source of information

We cannot always trust what we read, hear, or see. In order to make sense of all the sources of information we are exposed to and choose those that help us make informed choices, we need to exercise our critical thinking and conduct a little investigation. To do this, we need clues, which we will find by asking ourselves **three questions**:

1. **WHO** is talking to me?
2. **HOW** are they talking to me?
3. **WHY** are they talking to me?

1. WHO is talking to me?

Behind any piece of information, there is an author or a source. This first question asks us to identify which source is behind a piece of information and to determine whether we can trust it. There are different types of authors and sources. Here are some examples:

- Company, business
- Columnist
- Influencer
- Artificial intelligence
- Journalist, news media
- Public organization (school, government, etc.) or community organization
- Political party, candidate
- People in our circle

Once we know what type of source of information we are dealing with, we need to assess whether that source knows the subject well enough for the information it shares to be credible. Here are some questions that can guide us:

- Is the source a specialist in the field?
- Does the information directly concern the source?
- Is it an official website or a well-known media outlet?
- On social media, is it an official account?

If we do not know the answer or if we answer no to these questions, we should be cautious, investigate further, or discard the source!

2. HOW are they talking to me?

The information we consult can generate different emotions and reactions. For instance:

- Anger
- Curiosity
- Disgust
- Boredom
- Worry
- Interest
- Joy
- Reflection
- Laughter
- Surprise
- Sadness

This second question invites us to assess what emotions we feel about a piece of information. It prompts us to look at the tone the author uses and the way they choose to present the information.

- Do the images or words used seem **very attention-grabbing** or exaggerated? In that case, it is best to be cautious — it may not be reliable information. False or misleading information does not aim to inform us, but to make us react quickly. It exploits our biases or prejudices so that emotions override reason or logic.
- Does the tone seem **neutral or informative**? News media tend to favour this approach, as they have a duty to present verified information in their news stories. Official sources, such as the government, also often use this tone.

Observing the way information is presented and the emotions we feel about it give us clues about its nature. For example, is this a fact? An opinion? A buzz? An advertisement?

In addition, the publication date of a piece of information, if mentioned, can also give us a telling clue. Something that was true last year may no longer be true today.

This same observation will also help us understand the reasons that may motivate the author or source to share the information. This is what we try to discover with the third question.

3. WHY are they talking to me?

Without necessarily being false, much of the information that reaches us is not there to inform us. For example, the author may want to:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------|
| • Attract attention | • Inform |
| • Convince us of certain ideas | • Make angry |
| • Entertain | • Deceive |
| • Scare | • Sell |

This question is intended to detect the intention behind the sharing of a piece of information. Trying to understand why someone is addressing us can help us decide whether or not to trust them.

Beware: these reasons are not always clearly stated. We need to be shrewd in conducting our investigation! For example, we often easily recognize advertisements, but they can also be embedded — and even disguised — in the videos of content creators. In a similar manner, political parties will publicly share their commitments during an election campaign. This is a way of informing electors about their plans... but also of trying to convince them to vote for them.

Furthermore, on the Internet and social media, many highly attention-grabbing pieces of content are designed to be seen and shared by a very large number of people. They take many forms (images, text, videos) and their popularity can be very advantageous for the people who shared them. Even if they may look like news, their purpose is not to inform but to attract clicks and reactions from Internet users.

Information sources under the microscope

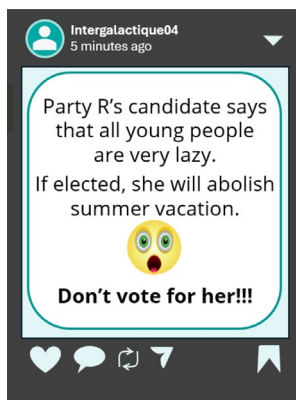
APPENDIX

Just like on the road, you need to follow certain rules to navigate the world of information safely. Imagine there is a traffic light in front of each new piece of information you come across:

- If the light is red, you stop, because it is a source of information that is not reliable.
- If the light is yellow, you slow down and verify, because you doubt that the source of information is reliable.
- If the light is green, you go ahead, because you judge that the source of information is reliable.

Grid for analyzing the reliability of a source of information			
WHO is talking to me?	HOW are they talking to me?	WHY are they talking to me?	CONCLUSION
What is the source of the information? _____ What type of source is it? ☐ Artificial intelligence ☐ Columnist ☐ Company, business ☐ Influencer ☐ Journalist, news media ☐ Political party, candidate ☐ Public organization ☐ Someone I know ☐ I don't know ☐ _____ Is this person a specialist on the subject? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don't know	What emotion(s) or reaction(s) does the information provoke? ☐ Anger ☐ Boredom ☐ Curiosity ☐ Disgust ☐ Interest ☐ Joy ☐ Laughter ☐ Reflection ☐ Sadness ☐ Surprise ☐ Worry ☐ _____ What type of information is it? ☐ Advertisement ☐ Fact ☐ Opinion ☐ Rumour ☐ I don't know ☐ _____ Is the information dated and up to date? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don't know	In your opinion, what are the intentions of the author of the information? ☐ Attract attention ☐ Convince ☐ Deceive ☐ Entertain ☐ Inform ☐ Make angry ☐ Scare ☐ Sell ☐ I don't know ☐ _____ What clues make me think of this intention or these intentions? _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	In your opinion, is this source of information reliable?  ☐ Red light: I don't think so ☐ Yellow light: I have doubts ☐ Green light: I think so What do I do with the information? ☐ I discard the information, I don't share it ☐ I verify the information by doing more research ☐ I ask an adult I know for advice ☐ I use it to form an opinion and I might decide to share it with people close to me or in my network ☐ _____

SCENARIOS

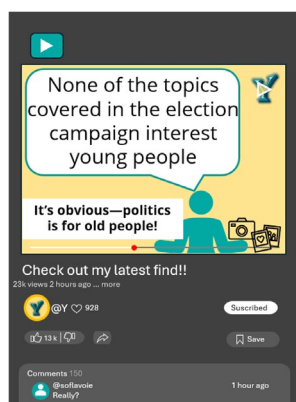


Scenario no. 1

During the election campaign, you see a surprising post on social media that catches your attention.

You do not know the person who posted this information, which portrays the candidate in a negative light.

The post has been shared by thousands of people. You wonder whether this source of information is reliable.



Scenario no. 2

You follow influencer Y's channel with interest — she is known for her fun videos in which she shares all kinds of finds.

In today's video, she shows a camera that can be purchased from her online shop. At the end of the video, the influencer shifts her focus to the elections and shares her point of view.

You wonder whether this source of information is reliable when it comes to elections.



Scenario no. 3

Before the electoral simulation, you want to learn more about the candidates in the election. You use artificial intelligence to get a summary of their proposals.

The tool's response mentions three candidates. However, you think you have seen election signs for more than three candidates on the street.

You wonder whether this source of information is reliable.

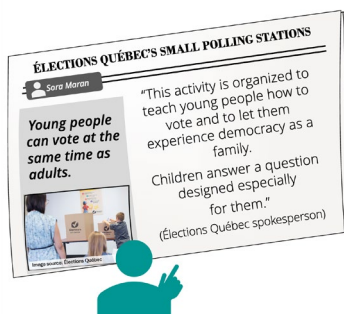
SCENARIOS

**Scenario no. 4**

Your friend proudly announces what he heard on the radio: the hockey team's mascot will be running in the election!

The message draws attention and creates a strong reaction.

For your part, you wonder whether this source of information is reliable.

**Scenario no. 5**

In today's local newspaper, you read this article.

It is an interview with the Élections Québec spokesperson conducted by a journalist.

You wonder whether you can share this information.

**Broaden
Your
Horizons**

Do you want to make an informed choice? Consult the *Making an informed decision when voting* page on the Élections Québec website: <https://www.electionsquebec.qc.ca/en/understand/understanding-voting/making-an-informed-decision-when-voting/>.

Information sources under the microscope

ACTIVITY SHEET

Just like on the road, you need to follow certain rules to navigate the world of information safely. Imagine there is a traffic light in front of each new piece of information you come across:

- If the light is red, you stop, because it is a source of information that is not reliable.
- If the light is yellow, you slow down and verify, because you doubt that the source of information is reliable.
- If the light is green, you go ahead, because you judge that the source of information is reliable.

Grid for analyzing the reliability of a source of information			Scenario no.
WHO is talking to me?	HOW are they talking to me?	WHY are they talking to me?	CONCLUSION
What is the source of the information? _____ What type of source is it? ☐ Artificial intelligence ☐ Columnist ☐ Company, business ☐ Influencer ☐ Journalist, news media ☐ Political party, candidate ☐ Public organization ☐ Someone I know ☐ I don't know ☐ _____ Is this person a specialist on the subject? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don't know	What emotion(s) or reaction(s) does the information provoke? ☐ Anger ☐ Boredom ☐ Curiosity ☐ Disgust ☐ Interest ☐ Joy ☐ Laughter ☐ Reflection ☐ Sadness ☐ Surprise ☐ Worry ☐ _____ What type of information is it? ☐ Advertisement ☐ Fact ☐ Opinion ☐ Rumour ☐ I don't know ☐ _____ Is the information dated and up to date? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don't know	In your opinion, what are the intentions of the author of the information? ☐ Attract attention ☐ Convince ☐ Deceive ☐ Entertain ☐ Inform ☐ Make angry ☐ Scare ☐ Sell ☐ I don't know ☐ _____ What clues make me think of this intention or these intentions? _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	In your opinion, is this source of information reliable?  ☐ Red light: I don't think so ☐ Yellow light: I have doubts ☐ Green light: I think so What do I do with the information? ☐ I discard the information, I don't share it ☐ I verify the information by doing more research ☐ I ask an adult I know for advice ☐ I use it to form an opinion and I might decide to share it with people close to me or in my network ☐ _____

ANSWER KEY FOR THE FACILITATOR

Note: The completed grids are provided **for reference purposes** to support the feedback with students. Multiple answers are possible for the interpretive elements of the grid in relation to the scenarios. The goal is to allow students to exercise their critical thinking to analyze the reliability of a source of information.

1

Grid for analyzing the reliability of a source of information

Scenario no.

WHO is talking to me?	HOW are they talking to me?	WHY are they talking to me?	CONCLUSION
What is the source of the information? <u>Intergalactique04</u> What type of source is it? ☐ Artificial intelligence ☐ Columnist ☐ Company, business ☐ Influencer ☐ Journalist, news media ☐ Political party, candidate ☐ Public organization ☐ Someone I know ☒ I don't know ☐ _____ Is this person a specialist on the subject? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ I don't know	What emotion(s) or reaction(s) does the information provoke? ☐ Anger ☐ Boredom ☐ Curiosity ☐ Disgust ☐ Interest ☐ Joy ☐ Laughter ☐ Reflection ☐ Sadness ☐ Surprise ☐ Worry ☐ _____ What type of information is it? ☐ Advertisement ☐ Fact ☐ Opinion ☒ Rumour ☐ I don't know ☐ _____ Is the information dated and up to date? ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don't know	In your opinion, what are the intentions of the author of the information? ☐ Attract attention ☐ Convince ☐ Deceive ☐ Entertain ☐ Inform ☐ Make angry ☐ Scare ☐ Sell ☐ I don't know ☐ _____ What clues make me think of this intention or these intentions? • <u>Surprising and unlikely information</u> • <u>Portrays the candidate in a negative light and could provoke strong reactions</u> • <u>Could be a joke</u> • <u>Could be disinformation</u>	In your opinion, is this source of information reliable? ☐ Red light: I don't think so ☒ Yellow light: I have doubts ☐ Green light: I think so What do I do with the information? ☒ I discard the information, I don't share it  ☒ I verify the information by doing more research  ☒ I ask an adult I know for advice ☐ I use it to form an opinion and I might decide to share it with people close to me or in my network ☐ _____

 To check whether other reliable sources share the same information (such as the party's or candidate's website, news medium, etc.).

 Other possible action: since I doubt the reliability of the source of information, I may also decide not to conduct further research and discard the information without sharing it, particularly because this information portrays the candidate in a negative light.

ANSWER KEY FOR THE FACILITATOR

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2

Grid for analyzing the reliability of a source of information

Scenario no.

WHO is talking to me?	HOW are they talking to me?	WHY are they talking to me?	CONCLUSION
What is the source of the information? <u>Influencer Y</u> What type of source is it? ☐ Artificial intelligence ☐ Columnist ☐ Company, business ☒ Influencer ☐ Journalist, news media ☐ Political party, candidate ☐ Public organization ☐ Someone I know ☐ I don't know ☐ _____ Is this person a specialist on the subject? ☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ I don't know	What emotion(s) or reaction(s) does the information provoke? ☐ Anger ☐ Boredom ☐ Curiosity ☐ Disgust ☐ Interest ☐ Joy ☐ Laughter ☐ Reflection ☐ Sadness ☐ Surprise ☐ Worry ☐ _____ What type of information is it? ☐ Advertisement ☐ Fact ☒ Opinion ☐ Rumour ☐ I don't know ☐ _____ Is the information dated and up to date? ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don't know	In your opinion, what are the intentions of the author of the information? ☐ Attract attention ☐ Convince ☐ Deceive ☐ Entertain ☐ Inform ☐ Make angry ☐ Scare ☐ Sell ☐ I don't know ☐ _____ What clues make me think of this intention or these intentions? • <u>Sale of a product</u> • <u>Current events and politics are not among her usual topics</u> _____ _____ _____	In your opinion, is this source of information reliable?  ☒ Red light: I don't think so ☐ Yellow light: I have doubts ☐ Green light: I think so What do I do with the information? ☒ I discard the information, I don't share it  ☐ I verify the information by doing more research ☐ I ask an adult I know for advice ☐ I use it to form an opinion and I might decide to share it with people close to me or in my network ☐ _____



The primary intention of the influencer is probably to sell their products, not to inform their audience. In addition, they are expressing an opinion, not a fact. To form an opinion, one would need to check whether the various parties and candidates address topics that affect students on their websites or social media. Some content is entertaining but is not necessarily a reliable source of information.

ANSWER KEY FOR THE FACILITATOR

Note: The completed grids are provided **for reference purposes** to support the feedback with students. Multiple answers are possible for the interpretive elements of the grid in relation to the scenarios. The goal is to allow students to exercise their critical thinking to analyze the reliability of a source of information.

3

Grid for analyzing the reliability of a source of information

Scenario no.

WHO is talking to me?	HOW are they talking to me?	WHY are they talking to me?	CONCLUSION
What is the source of the information? <u>Artificial intelligence</u> What type of source is it? ☒ Artificial intelligence ☐ Columnist ☐ Company, business ☐ Influencer ☐ Journalist, news media ☐ Political party, candidate ☐ Public organization ☐ Someone I know ☐ I don't know ☐ _____ Is this person a specialist on the subject? ☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ I don't know	What emotion(s) or reaction(s) does the information provoke? ☐ Anger ☐ Boredom ☐ Curiosity ☐ Disgust ☐ Interest ☐ Joy ☐ Laughter ☐ Reflection ☐ Sadness ☐ Surprise ☐ Worry ☐ _____ What type of information is it? ☐ Advertisement ☐ Fact ☐ Opinion ☐ Rumour ☒ I don't know ☐ _____ Is the information dated and up to date? ☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ I don't know	In your opinion, what are the intentions of the author of the information? ☐ Attract attention ☐ Convince ☐ Deceive ☐ Entertain ☐ Inform ☐ Make angry ☐ Scare ☐ Sell ☐ I don't know ☐ _____ What clues make me think of this intention or these intentions? • <u>Technological tool</u> <u>programmed to provide an answer</u> • <u>The intention is unknown</u> • <u>The accuracy of the answer is not guaranteed</u>	In your opinion, is this source of information reliable?  ☐ Red light: I don't think so ☒ Yellow light: I have doubts ☐ Green light: I think so What do I do with the information? ☒ I discard the information, I don't share it  ☒ I verify the information by doing more research  ☒ I ask an adult I know for advice ☐ I use it to form an opinion and I might decide to share it with people close to me or in my network ☐ _____

 Artificial intelligence is not a reliable source of information. If you use it, you should exercise caution and always verify the generated answers against reliable sources.

 Other possible action: since I doubt the reliability of the source of information, I may also decide not to conduct further research and discard the information without sharing it.

ANSWER KEY FOR THE FACILITATOR

Note: The completed grids are provided for **reference purposes** to support the feedback with students. Multiple answers are possible for the interpretive elements of the grid in relation to the scenarios. The goal is to allow students to exercise their critical thinking to analyze the reliability of a source of information.

4

Grid for analyzing the reliability of a source of information

Scenario no.

WHO is talking to me?	HOW are they talking to me?	WHY are they talking to me?	CONCLUSION
What is the source of the information? <u>My friend</u> What type of source is it? ☐ Artificial intelligence ☐ Columnist ☐ Company, business ☐ Influencer ☐ Journalist, news media ☐ Political party, candidate ☐ Public organization ☒ Someone I know ☐ I don't know ☐ _____ Is this person a specialist on the subject? ☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ I don't know	What emotion(s) or reaction(s) does the information provoke? ☐ Anger ☐ Boredom ☐ Curiosity ☐ Disgust ☐ Interest ☐ Joy ☐ Laughter ☐ Reflection ☐ Sadness ☐ Surprise ☐ Worry ☐ _____ What type of information is it? ☐ Advertisement ☐ Fact ☐ Opinion ☒ Rumour ☐ I don't know ☐ _____ Is the information dated and up to date? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ I don't know	In your opinion, what are the intentions of the author of the information? ☐ Attract attention ☐ Convince ☐ Deceive ☐ Entertain ☐ Inform ☐ Make angry ☐ Scare ☐ Sell ☐ I don't know ☐ _____ What clues make me think of this intention or these intentions? • <u>Very surprising information</u> • <u>The information provokes reactions (e.g., laughter, questioning, desire to share the information)</u> _____ _____	In your opinion, is this source of information reliable? ☐ Red light: I don't think so ☒ Yellow light: I have doubts ☐ Green light: I think so What do I do with the information? ☒ I discard the information, I don't share it  ☒ I verify the information by doing more research  ☒ I ask an adult I know for advice ☐ I use it to form an opinion and I might decide to share it with people close to me or in my network ☐ _____

 This friend may not be a reliable source. They are repeating information they say they heard on the radio, but there is no way of knowing whether this information is accurate.

 Other possible action: since I doubt the reliability of the source of information, I may also decide not to conduct further research and discard the information without sharing it.

ANSWER KEY FOR THE FACILITATOR

Note: The completed grids are provided for **reference purposes** to support the feedback with students. Multiple answers are possible for the interpretive elements of the grid in relation to the scenarios. The goal is to allow students to exercise their critical thinking to analyze the reliability of a source of information.

5

Grid for analyzing the reliability of a source of information

Scenario no.

WHO is talking to me?	HOW are they talking to me?	WHY are they talking to me?	CONCLUSION
What is the source of the information? <u>Local newspaper</u> What type of source is it? ☐ Artificial intelligence ☐ Columnist ☐ Company, business ☐ Influencer ☒ Journalist, news media ☐ Political party, candidate ☒ Public organization ☐ Someone I know ☐ I don't know ☐ _____ Is this person a specialist on the subject? ☒ Yes <u>For the Élections Québec spokesperson</u> ☐ No ☐ I don't know	What emotion(s) or reaction(s) does the information provoke? ☐ Anger ☐ Boredom ☐ Curiosity ☐ Disgust ☐ Interest ☐ Joy ☐ Laughter ☐ Reflection ☐ Sadness ☐ Surprise ☐ Worry ☐ _____ What type of information is it? ☐ Advertisement ☒ Fact ☐ Opinion ☐ Rumour ☐ I don't know ☐ _____ Is the information dated and up to date? ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don't know	In your opinion, what are the intentions of the author of the information? ☐ Attract attention ☐ Convince ☐ Deceive ☐ Entertain ☐ Inform ☐ Make angry ☐ Scare ☐ Sell ☐ I don't know ☐ _____ What clues make me think of this intention or these intentions? • <u>Information from a well-known newspaper's article</u> • <u>Information dated today</u> • <u>The journalist cites a source who is a specialist on the subject</u>	In your opinion, is this source of information reliable?  ☐ Red light: I don't think so ☐ Yellow light: I have doubts ☒ Green light: I think so What do I do with the information? ☐ I discard the information, I don't share it ☐ I verify the information by doing more research ☐ I ask an adult I know for advice ☒ I use it to form an opinion and I might decide to share it with people close to me or in my network  ☐ _____



The source of information in this scenario is a newspaper article (secondary source), in which the journalist cites the Élections Québec spokesperson (primary source). Journalists have a responsibility to verify the information they publish.