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## The Best Cheeseburger Ever

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# The Best Cheeseburger Ever

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## NUTRITION INFORMATION

This flexible recipe about evaluating sources can be done with minimal time, preparation, and equipment. It helps students think about sources in a different way than they likely have before, encouraging careful consideration of various source evaluation criteria without using an oversimplified checklist approach. The recipe can apply to any level or discipline and primarily targets students' dispositions related to source evaluation.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will

- develop increased motivation for critically evaluating sources and
- describe multiple criteria for evaluating sources.

## COOKING TIME

15–20 minutes

## NUMBER SERVED

10–40 students

## DIETARY GUIDELINES

This recipe meets several dietary needs related to the ACRL *Framework* concept Authority is Constructed and Contextual.

Knowledge practices focus on learners' abilities to

- define different types of authority, such

as subject expertise, societal position, or special experience and

- recognize that authoritative content may be packaged formally or informally and may include sources of all media types.

Dispositions focus on learners' inclinations to

- motivate themselves to find authoritative sources, recognizing that authority may be conferred or manifested in unexpected ways;
- develop awareness of the importance of assessing content with a skeptical stance and with a self-awareness of their own biases and worldview; and
- question traditional notions of granting authority and recognize the value of diverse ideas and worldviews.

## INGREDIENTS AND EQUIPMENT

Whiteboard and whiteboard marker (or poster paper and marker). Since this recipe is free of specialty ingredients, it can be cooked nearly anywhere.

## PREPARATION

No preparation is required, but you might consider practicing this recipe first with colleagues or student employees.

## COOKING METHOD

1. Ask students to think about the best cheeseburger they ever ate. Have them

share aloud what made the burger so good.

2. As students share, write each characteristic on the whiteboard in two unlabeled columns. One column includes ingredients, such as bacon, cheese, lettuce, tomato, etc. The other goes beyond simply listing ingredients, including things that truly determine burger quality, i.e., ingredients' freshness, local sourcing, the cook/chef's skills, etc.
3. Students may need to be prompted to list things for the second column. When prompting, be sure not to give away the differences between the two columns or why you are writing characteristics in columns. Some relevant questions include: Who made the burger? How many of you were thinking about a restaurant burger? A home-cooked burger? Does the training of the cook/chef matter?
4. When the columns are populated (the first will likely be far longer), ask students to vote for which column is more important to the overall quality of the burger. Generally, the students will come to an agreement that the second column has more bearing on quality.
5. Debrief together about why the second column is more important. A typical conclusion is that if those characteristics are in place, the ingredients will follow. It's the actual *quality* of the ingredients and

credentials/experience of the chef that elevate the humble burger into something special, not just the fact that there are a bunch of toppings.

6. Explain how the burger metaphor is related to sources. Be creative! Examples:

<p><b>The chef/cook:</b> It's important that they have some credentials, such as a culinary degree or even just lots of experience at the backyard BBQ in order to put out a quality product.</p>	<p><b>The author:</b> We need to consider how qualified they are to write about the topic. For example, journalists may write about the same topic as researchers but likely don't have a related degree.</p>
<p><b>The setting:</b> The restaurant matters. After all, your favorite burger probably came from someplace a little better than McDonald's!</p>	<p><b>The source:</b> The book, magazine, newspaper, journal, or website where a chapter or article appears says a lot about its credibility.</p>
<p><b>Freshness:</b> I don't care if you have a giant burger and tons of toppings. If they aren't fresh, the quality is compromised.</p>	<p><b>Publication date:</b> This matters more for some topics than others but should be a factor when selecting sources.</p>
<p><b>Sourcing:</b> Fresh, local beef and vegetables harvested in the chef's own garden are going to taste much better than anything that had to travel a long way.</p>	<p><b>Citations:</b> What sources did the authors cite? If they are high-quality, they'll contribute to a higher-quality source.</p>

**Cost/convenience:**  
An amazing burger might cost a bit more and might require traveling to a particular restaurant.

**Cost/convenience:**  
High-quality sources can be more expensive to produce and might be behind a paywall or require placing a request.

7. If it didn't come naturally for students to populate the second column, point out that evaluating sources doesn't come naturally at times. We initially may look more at the content itself and even how long a source may be. But we should train ourselves to look beyond that.

**ALLERGY WARNING**

Quieter student "diners" may need some encouragement to partake.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

- This recipe was created by a stroke of inspiration during a class discussion and was later formalized into a structured recipe. While designed for early college students in required introductory courses, this recipe has been successfully tested with undergraduate students at a variety of levels/subjects. Some students will need to think about a veggie burger or other cheeseburger alternative.
- My diners often include many from small towns. I gain credibility when sharing how this city kid finally discovered that locally produced meat is much higher quality and tastier than typical grocery store meat! If your diners include inter-

national students or other diverse populations, be ready to modify this recipe accordingly. It can even double-dip as a lesson about American food culture!

- A little humor goes a long way. You might ask students to stop drooling as they think about a burger, or you may give a negative review of the hockey puck burgers your mom made during your childhood. (My librarian mom knows I do this.)
- This quick bite can be a standalone lesson with limited time or an appetizer to a larger instruction session "meal." It would transition nicely into hands-on searching time, discussion of the popular/scholarly source spectrum, or analysis of sample sources in groups. Encourage students to keep the columns in mind as they evaluate and select sources.