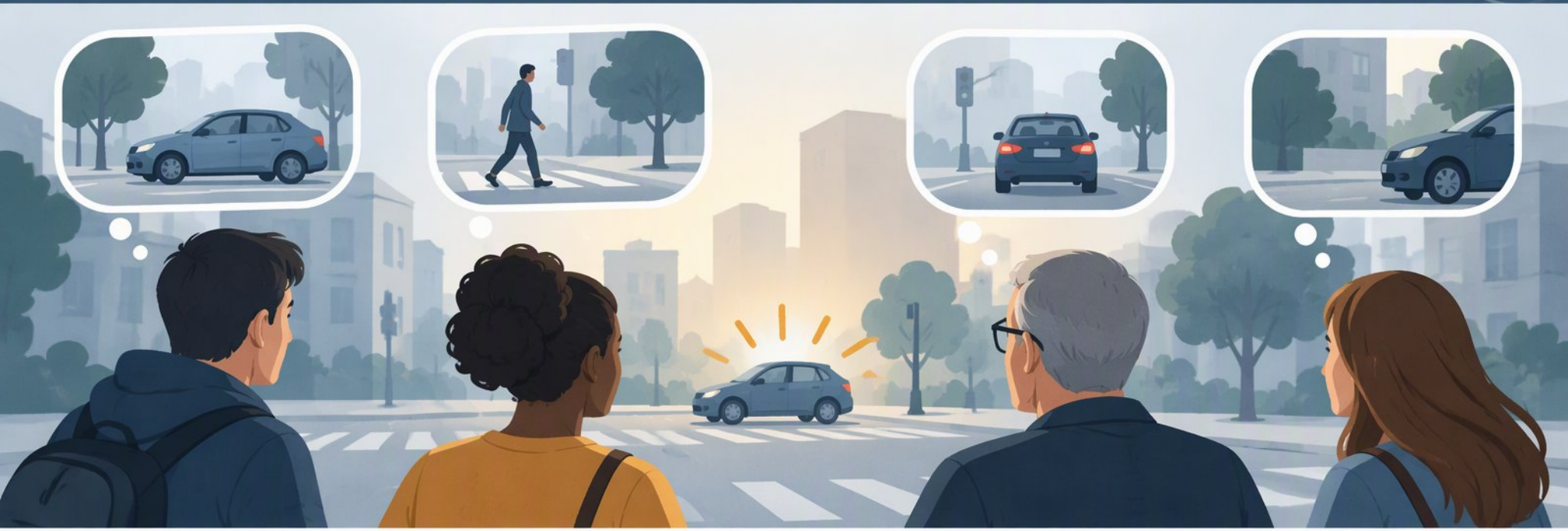
Corroborating Sources: Checking Conflicting Accounts

- Conflicting accounts are normal, not proof someone is lying
- Corroboration tests a claim against independent evidence
- Roadmap: why accounts diverge, map sources, check reliability, compare, triangulate, conclude
- Payoff: stronger accuracy, credibility, and better decisions at school, work, and home



Why Honest Accounts Diverge





- Perspective, timing, incomplete views, and ambiguous words create disagreement



- Memory is reconstructive: later information, questioning, and other people can alter it



- Confidence and emotion are poor signals of accuracy



- Practical habit: ask why accounts differ before deciding who is right

When the Divergence Is Deliberate

SAME EVENTS. DIFFERENT ACCOUNTS. DIFFERENT MOTIVES.



Honest Error

Factually incorrect information shared without intent to deceive.



Bias

Selective emphasis or incomplete information that can shape perception.



Deliberate Disinformation

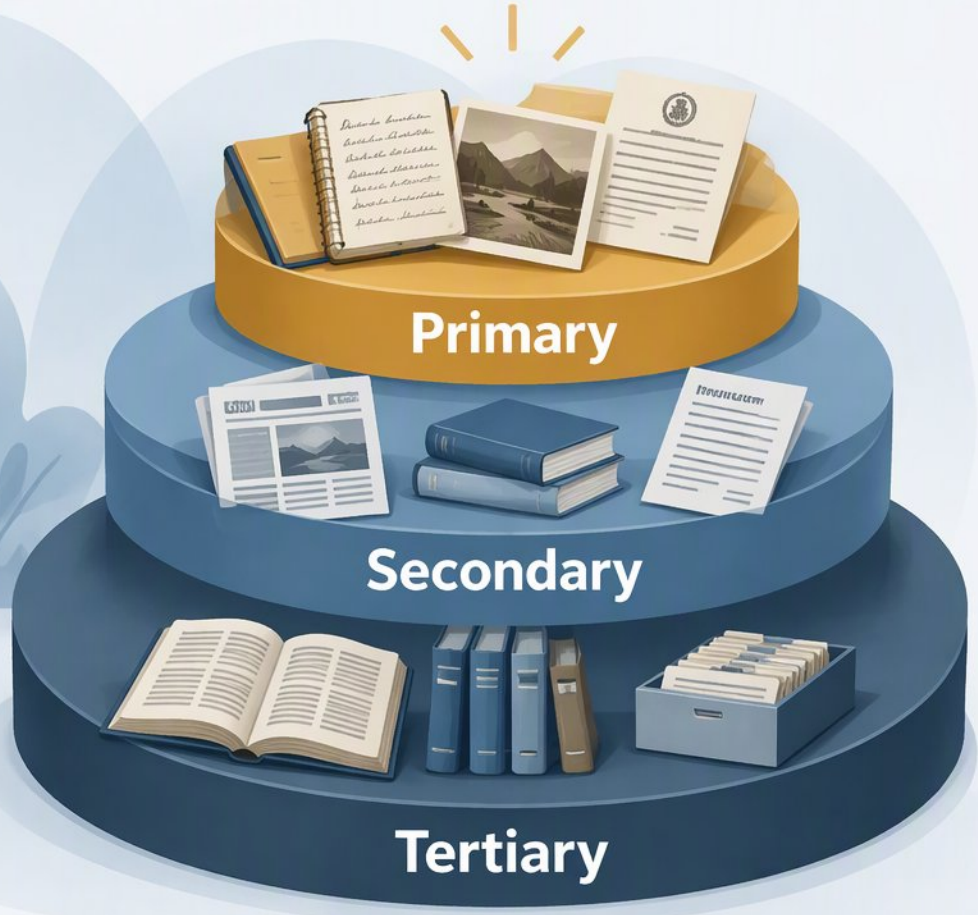
False information shared with intent to deceive.

- **Framing, selective disclosure, censorship,** and **propaganda** can drive conflicts
- **Motives matter:** financial gain, political advantage, or persuasion
- **Misinformation:** false information shared without intent to deceive
- **Disinformation:** false information shared with intent to deceive
- **Ask:** Who benefits from this version of events?



LOOK CLOSER.
CONSIDER PERSPECTIVE.

Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Sources



Primary: firsthand records—interviews, diaries, photos, official documents, raw data

Secondary: interpret primary material—news articles, textbooks, reviews

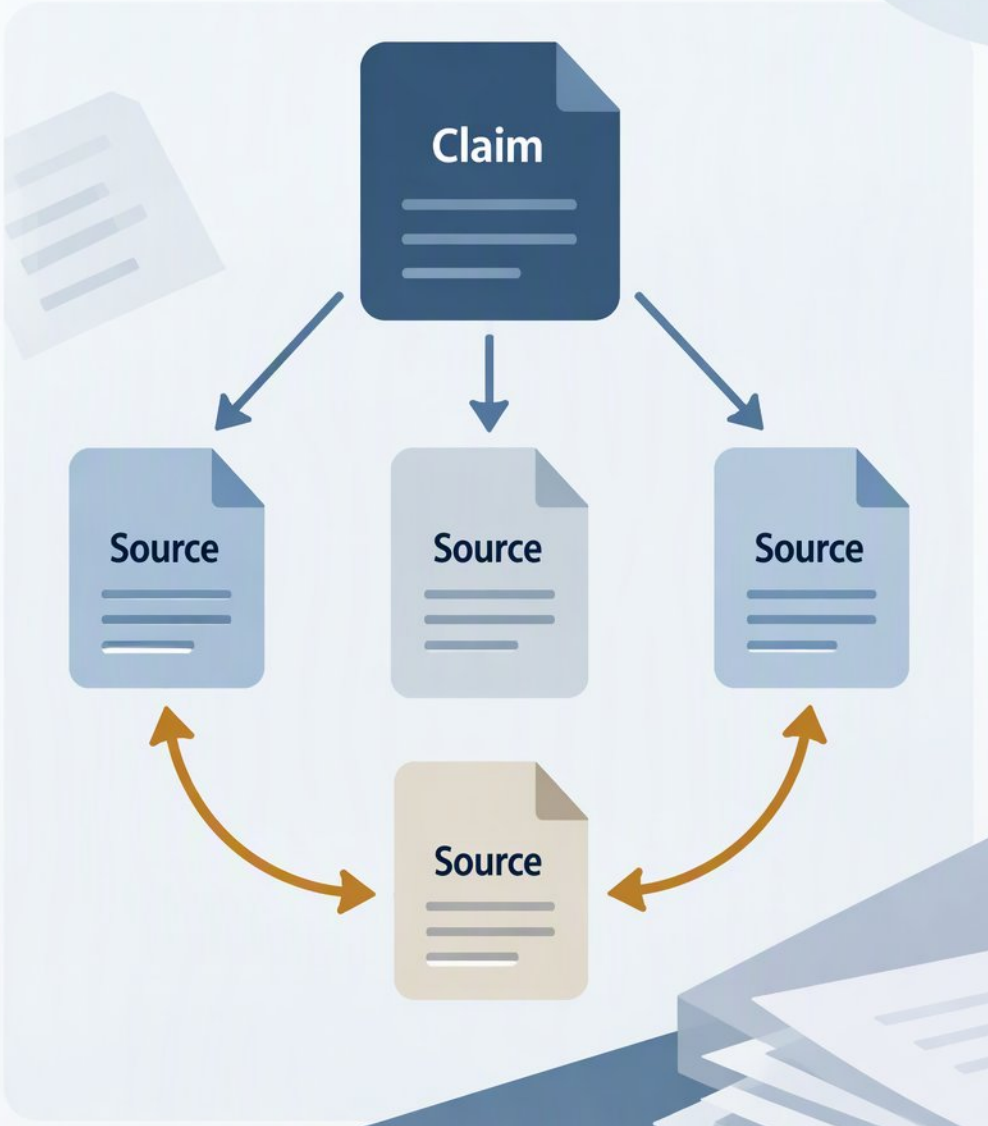
Tertiary: compile and index—encyclopedias, databases, catalogs

Closer to origin isn't automatically more accurate—but usually easier to test

Same item can shift type depending on how you use it

Building a Simple Source Map

- For each claim, record source, date, origin, and links to other sources
- Trace who copied whom; independent sources beat dependent ones
- Flag phrases like “according to,” “reported by,” and “citing” to reveal secondhand chains
- One-page map exposes circular reporting before it misleads you



Four Quick Reliability Checks

- Check authorship, purpose, evidence, and editorial process
- Real expertise beats celebrity, confidence, or official-looking design
- Red flags: missing dates, unnamed sources, emotional manipulation, copied phrasing
- Trusted sources are consistently reliable, but still err sometimes
- Match evidence to the claim: official data, named witnesses, original documents



Authorship

Purpose

Evidence Offered

Editorial Process

Red Flags

- missing dates
- unnamed sources
- emotional manipulation
- copied phrasing

Trusted sources are consistently reliable, **but still err sometimes.**

Match evidence to the claim: official data, named witnesses, original documents.

Lateral Reading and Click Restraint

Read laterally: leave the site, open new tabs, see what others say

Click restraint: scan results and hover links before clicking

Stanford study: fact checkers read less but judged more accurately

SIFT: Stop, Investigate the source, Find better coverage, Trace to original



> **The best way to learn about a site is to leave it**

Separating Claims from Evidence

- Name the exact assertion before testing it
- Compare against what is actually shown or documented
- Build a grid: claim, account A, B, C, plus dates
- Ask what is the same, what differs, what is missing
- Track patterns of convergence and contradiction, not one gotcha



Triangulating Independent Evidence

- Triangulation: seek at least two or three independent lines of evidence
- Five copies of one origin still count as a single source
- Independence matters more than sheer quantity of sources
- When corroboration is impossible, label the claim uncertain—don't guess
- Stronger sources plus more independence equals stronger conclusions



BETTER EVIDENCE
STRONGER UNDERSTANDING

Common Traps: False Balance and Circular Reporting

THINK CRITICALLY. TRACE THE SOURCES. LOOK FOR INDEPENDENT EVIDENCE.

1. **False balance:** treating a fringe view as equal to well-supported consensus
2. **Climate coverage:** independent lines of evidence converge; skeptics get outsized airtime
3. **Circular reporting:** many outlets repeat one unverified origin, appearing to confirm it
4. **Wikipedia-press loops:** the fake "xeraflop" prefix and "Brazilian Aardvarks" nickname
5. **Test:** are sources independent, or repeating each other?

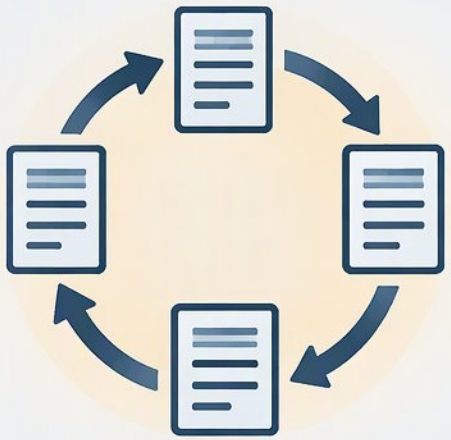
False Balance



Independent Lines of Evidence Converge



Circular Reporting



Biases in Ourselves and Our Sources

BE MORE CURIOUS. SEEK A BROADER PERSPECTIVE.



- **Confirmation bias:** we favor accounts that match existing beliefs
- **Cognitive dissonance:** we discount evidence that challenges our views
- **Emotional headlines and strong confidence** can make bad accounts feel true
- **Watch for selective distortion:** hearing only what affirms your beliefs
- **Countermeasure:** ask what would change your mind, then seek that evidence

CLEARER THINKING
BRIGHTER CONVERSATIONS

Five-Step Workflow: From Conflict to Conclusion

A structured approach to evaluate information, reduce uncertainty, and reach a well-reasoned conclusion.

Clearer Thinking Leads Further

1 Step 1 – Pause



notice the emotional pull before reacting

2 Step 2 – Map sources



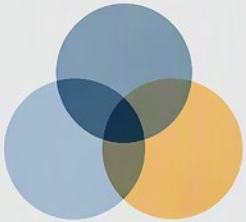
record who said what, and when

3 Step 3 – Check reliability



authorship, purpose, evidence, independence

4 Step 4 – Compare claims



look for agreement, conflict, and gaps

5 Step 5 – Write a calibrated conclusion



"supported," "mixed," or "unverified"



Document your source trail so others can audit your reasoning



auditable



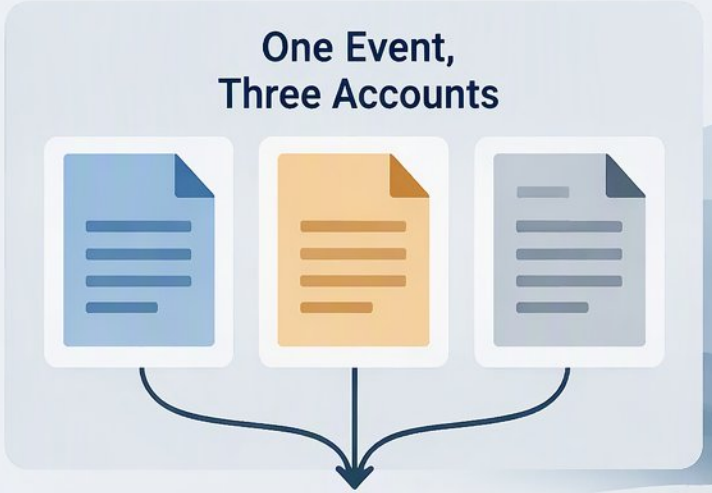
High-stakes and unresolved? Escalate to qualified experts or primary sources

Better Questions A Stronger Tomorrow

Practice: Resolving a Conflicting Account

SAME EVIDENCE
DEEPER THINKING
CLEARER INSIGHTS

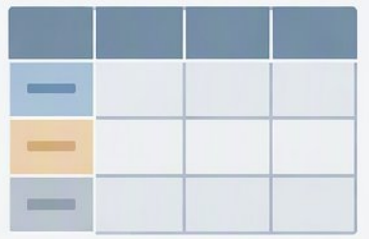
- Start with one event described by at least three disagreeing accounts
- Build the source map, run reliability checks, then fill a comparison grid
- Note where accounts agree, where they differ, and what is missing
- Draft a short conclusion: what is supported, what remains uncertain
- Peer review test: can a classmate follow your trail and reach a similar judgment?















FOLLOW THE EVIDENCE
BUILD A CLEARER PICTURE

Tools, Checklist, and Key Takeaways

LOOK CLOSER
THINK CRITICALLY
FIND THE TRUTH

Everyday tools

- Everyday tools: Google Lens, Bing Visual Search, TinEye, InVID-WeVerify

Fact-check hubs

- Fact-check hubs: Google Fact Check Explorer, Snopes, PolitiFact, FactCheck.org

Reverse image search finds older, edited copies—not proof of authenticity

Corroboration is an ongoing habit, not a one-time check

Two-minute checklist

- Stop
- Investigate
- Find better coverage
- Trace



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Scan the code or click anywhere to watch this course live, with voice Q&A

personwise.ai/t/cb0a72b5/public