



# Exploring Leadership

## PROBLEM SOLVING: EVALUATION

Most young adults know what they like or dislike, but they often don't know why. They may have strong opinions, but struggle to explain or defend them with logical reasoning. By asking specific questions, we can develop their critical evaluation skills and guide them to determine why something is good, valuable, or true. Encouraging this critical approach to information prepares young people to think independently and become informed, engaged citizens in today's democratic society.

### CONVERSATION STARTER:

Do you see the Earth as a living organism that adapts to human activity, or do you believe we're harming it? The answer you give isn't as important as exploring WHY you think that way.

Opinions are everywhere, but not all are created equal. Informed opinions stand out because they are based on careful evaluation of facts. In a world filled with false claims, flashy advertising, and bias, it's more important than ever to question what you're told. Evaluation involves digging deeper into facts and considering who is presenting them and why. It's about filtering noise to find the truth and make decisions that align with your values.

## EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES:

Explore how factual information can sometimes obscure the full story. This activity helps you practice evaluating details and questioning what you're told.

### FACILITATOR TIPS:

- If any participants already know the 'trick' about DHMO, encourage them to keep it within their group to maintain the activity's impact.
- If time permits, let groups share their paragraphs with the others to discuss how they are factual but not entirely truthful.

### KEY OBJECTIVES:

- Learn how to critically evaluate information and identify hidden purposes behind facts.
- Build skills to distinguish between factual and misleading information.

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Copies of the DHMO paragraphs (see Appendix)
- Scissors (for separating paragraphs)
- Writing tools (pens or pencils)

- Divide participants into groups of 4–5 and give each group a DHMO paragraph from the Appendix, along with pens or pencils.
- explain that while the statements in each paragraph are factual, the full story becomes clearer when all the paragraphs are reviewed together
- Ask each group to discuss: What do they think is the purpose of their paragraph? Why are these facts being presented?
- Have groups identify: One solution to neutralize DHMO and one question they want answered. Write these down.
- After five minutes, let groups share their solutions and questions. Allow others to answer if possible.
- Reveal that DHMO, or dihydrogen monoxide, is simply water (H<sub>2</sub>O). Revisit the paragraphs to show how factual information can mislead when taken out of context.



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- In your group evaluation of the facts, did you suspect something misleading was going on? Why or why not?
- What did your group think was the purpose of the facts being presented?
- How can facts sometimes be used to mislead or create bias, even when they are true?

## APPLICATION DISCUSSION:

- What are some real-life examples of facts you should evaluate critically before believing or acting on them?
- What tools or techniques can you use to evaluate facts and determine if they tell the whole truth?



## CONCLUSION:

Don't let misinformation influence your decisions. Develop the habit of consistently checking facts and evaluating sources before you act. Mastering evaluation skills helps you succeed personally and professionally while strengthening your role as a responsible citizen. Social media often presents opinions as factual information, making it crucial to distinguish between truth and persuasion. Bias isn't always false—it's often influenced by someone else's perspective. Stay curious, think critically, and confidently question the information you encounter.

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## REFERENCES

- 4 Steps of Student Self-Assessment: <https://www.edutopia.org/practice/mastering-self-assessment-deepening-independent-learning-through-arts>
- Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view: <https://www.ideaedu.org/idea-notes-on-learning/learning-to-analyze-and-critically-evaluate-ideas-arguments-and-points-of-view/>
- DHMO: <https://www.dhmo.org/>
- Health Promotion: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/A/2015/at-a-glance-10step-evaluation.pdf?la=en>
- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: The danger of a single story: <https://youtu.be/D9lhs24Izeg?si=zh5SJoqyQvo22USa> (19:16 minutes)



## APPENDIX:

Dihydrogen monoxide (DHMO) is a colorless, odorless, tasteless compound that kills thousands of people every year. Most of these deaths are caused by accidental inhalation of DHMO, but the dangers do not end there. Symptoms of DHMO ingestion can include excessive sweating and urination, nausea, vomiting, and electrolyte imbalance in the body. For those who have become dependent, DHMO withdrawal means certain death, and dependence is common because it has been allowed to contaminate the entire American food supply. Not only is it an additive in many highly processed 'junk foods,' but it has been in such wide use for so many years that it is now in the soil. Even after thorough washing, produce remains contaminated with DHMO. Companies dump waste DHMO into rivers and the ocean, and nothing can be done to stop them because this practice is still legal. (Visit <https://www.dhmo.org/> for more information.)

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Dihydrogen monoxide (DHMO) is a colorless, odorless, tasteless compound that kills thousands of people every year. The impact of DHMO on nature and wildlife is extreme. Also known as hydroxyl acid, DHMO is the major component of acid rain. It contributes to the "greenhouse effect" and the erosion of our natural landscape. DHMO has been detected in almost every stream, lake, and reservoir in America, but the pollution is global, and it has even been found deep in Antarctic ice. DHMO has caused millions of dollars in property damage across the Midwest and recently in California. Despite the danger, DHMO is often used as an industrial solvent, as a coolant in nuclear power plants, the production of Styrofoam, and in the distribution of pesticides. (Visit <https://www.dhmo.org/> for more information.)

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Dihydrogen monoxide (DHMO) is a colorless, odorless, tasteless compound that kills thousands of people every year. DHMO can cause severe burns on contact with human skin, and prolonged exposure to its solid form leads to significant tissue damage. The fact that it has been found in the excised tumors of terminal cancer patients indicates that DHMO contamination is reaching epidemic proportions. There is almost no aspect of American life that has not been impacted by DHMO, yet the American government has not banned its production or use, citing its "importance to the nation's economic health." (Visit <https://www.dhmo.org/> for more information.)

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Dihydrogen monoxide (DHMO) is a colorless, odorless, tasteless compound that kills thousands of people every year. Since it accelerates corrosion and rusting of metals, DHMO has been implicated in electrical and brake failure in automobiles for years, but now the navy and other military organizations are conducting experiments with DHMO and developing billion-dollar devices to control and use it in warfare. Hundreds of military research facilities receive tons of it through a highly-sophisticated underground distribution network. Many store large quantities for later use, and America is not the only world power to do so. (Visit <https://www.dhmo.org/> for more information.)