Why numbers need sources

Ages 15 and up, media literacy, maths or statistics

Students trace a score back to its inputs, read a confidence level, and learn how a published number can be questioned and corrected.

BEFORE THE LESSON

Pick one pair (the handout uses Japan and South Korea). Have the method paper open: it lists every formula.

STEPS

1. Open the pair and read its index. Ask: where could this number come from? Collect guesses. (5 min)
   https://nationsrelations.org/p/jpn-kor
2. Open the section 'Explain this score' on the pair page. Students list the four inputs and their weights. (10 min)
   https://nationsrelations.org/p/jpn-kor#explain
3. Students recompute the index from the table with a calculator and compare with the page. (10 min)
4. Find the confidence levels. Which input is least certain, and why? Read the thresholds in the method paper. (10 min)
   https://nationsrelations.org/method#confidence
5. Discuss how a reader reports a mistake and where decisions are published. (10 min)
   https://nationsrelations.org/corrections

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION OR WRITING

What would change the score if one input were wrong?

Why does the site show how sure it is instead of hiding uncertainty?

Would you cite this number in an essay? What would you write next to it?

KEEP IN MIND

Rounded numbers on the page can differ by one point from your own calculation. The explanation panel says when that happens.

Pages used: Japan and South Korea https://nationsrelations.org/p/jpn-kor; Scoring rules in full https://nationsrelations.org/method/0.1; Corrections https://nationsrelations.org/corrections

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