

Glendale College Library Information Competency Workshops
Citing Sources
Bedford Handbook Exercises: Recognizing Common Knowledge

Examples from Literature:

1. Many of William Faulkner's novels are set in Yoknapatawpha County, a fictional part of Mississippi.
 - common knowledge
 - needs citation
2. William Faulkner may have gotten the word Yoknapatawpha from a 1915 dictionary of the Choctaw language.
 - common knowledge
 - needs citation
3. The writer and folklorist Zora Neale Hurston died in poverty in 1960.
 - common knowledge
 - needs citation
4. William Shakespeare was the only playwright of his generation known to have a long-standing relationship with a single theater company.
 - common knowledge
 - needs citation
5. Walt Disney fired and blacklisted all of his animators who went on strike in 1941.
 - common knowledge
 - needs citation
6. William Wordsworth and Percy Bysshe Shelley were poets of the Romantic era.
 - common knowledge
 - needs citation
7. As of 2002, the film Titanic had earned over \$600 million in the United States alone.
 - common knowledge
 - needs citation
8. Heroic couplets are rhyming pairs of lines written in iambic pentameter.
 - common knowledge
 - needs citation
9. Iris Murdoch wrote many sophisticated and complex novels before she succumbed to Alzheimer's disease.
 - common knowledge
 - needs citation
10. George Lucas made a larger fortune by selling Star Wars toys than he made by selling tickets to Star Wars.
 - common knowledge
 - needs citation

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Examples from the Social Sciences:

1. In double-blind trials to test the effectiveness of St. John's wort as an antidepressant, the plant performed no better than a placebo.
 - common knowledge
 - needs citation
2. In 2000, Alan Greenspan was the chairman of the Federal Reserve Board.
 - common knowledge
 - needs citation
3. In both 2000 and 2001, the most popular name given to baby girls in the United States was Emily.
 - common knowledge
 - needs citation
4. Phrenology, the study of bumps on the skull, advanced scientists' understanding of the ways different parts of the brain function.
 - common knowledge
 - needs citation
5. The sense of smell and the sense of taste are linked.
 - common knowledge
 - needs citation
6. When the Homestead Act took effect, granting 160 acres of western land to any head of a household—male or female—who would live there and improve it for 5 years, women filed 10% of the claims.
 - common knowledge
 - needs citation
7. Babe Ruth's record for homeruns in a single season was not broken for decades.
 - common knowledge
 - needs citation
8. Many California earthquakes occur along the San Andreas Fault.
 - common knowledge
 - needs citation
9. Studies have shown that unlike elderly Americans, who tend to become more forgetful as they age, elderly people in mainland China have memories as good as those of younger people in their culture.
 - common knowledge
 - needs citation
10. Anorexia and bulimia are disorders affecting more young women than young men.
 - common knowledge
 - needs citation

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Examples from History:

1. In Rwanda in 1994, a civil war left hundreds of thousands of Tutsis and moderate Hutus dead.
 - common knowledge
 - needs citation
2. Tong wars erupted in New York's Chinatown in the early decades of the 20th century, giving that neighborhood the city's highest murder rate.
 - common knowledge
 - needs citation
3. Abraham Lincoln was assassinated in Ford's Theater in Washington, DC, as he sat watching a play.
 - common knowledge
 - needs citation
4. After the Civil War forty thousand former slaves had successful farms on the Sea Islands of South Carolina—the only place in the south where African Americans owned sizable quantities of land.
 - common knowledge
 - needs citation
5. The eruption of a volcano on the island of Krakatoa in Indonesia in 1883 spewed dense volcanic dust high into the atmosphere, blocking sunlight and lowering temperatures worldwide for months.
 - common knowledge
 - needs citation
6. The United States invasion of Cambodia in 1970 led to antiwar protests on many college campuses.
 - common knowledge
 - needs citation
7. A Sherpa named Tenzing Norgay helped guide Edmund Hillary to the top of Mt. Everest in 1953.
 - common knowledge
 - needs citation
8. General George Custer and all of his men were killed at the Battle of the Little Bighorn.
 - common knowledge
 - needs citation
9. The underground railroad provided shelter, guides, and assistance to runaway slaves as they made their way north to freedom.
 - common knowledge
 - needs citation
10. Beginning in March 1988 and continuing for seventeen months, Saddam Hussein had his air force drop poison gas on more than two hundred Kurdish villages and towns in Iraq.
 - common knowledge
 - needs citation