MILITARY REFERENCES

Instructor Lesson Plan

Time Required: 2.0 Hour

**Table of Contents**

[Lesson Description 2](#_Toc439150235)

[Introduction to Military References 4](#_Toc439150236)

[Topic 1: Research Methodology 5](#_Toc439150237)

[Topic 2: Citing Resources 7](#_Toc439150238)

[Practical Exercise 9](#_Toc439150239)

[Lesson Review, Assessment, and Wrap-up 10](#_Toc439150240)

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| Lesson Description | |
| The information below provides the instructor with an overview of the lesson and the materials that are required to effectively present this instruction. | |
| TMS # | 4175915 |
| Prerequisites | Prior to this lesson, the Rating Veteran Service Representatives (RVSRs) should have 24 months of RVSR experience. Trainees should also have completed RVSR Challenge. |
| target audience | The target audience for Military References is RVSR, Intermediate Level.  Although this lesson is targeted to teach the RVSR, Intermediate Level employee, it may be taught to other VA personnel as mandatory or refresher type training. |
| Time Required | 2 hours |
| Materials/ TRAINING AIDS | Lesson materials:   * Military References PowerPoint Presentation * Military References Trainee Handouts |
| Training Area/Tools | The following are required to ensure the trainees are able to meet the lesson objectives:   * Classroom or private area suitable for participatory discussions * Seating, writing materials, and writing surfaces for trainee note taking and participation * Handouts, which include a practical exercise * Large writing surface (easel pad, chalkboard, dry erase board, overhead projector, etc.) with appropriate writing materials * Computer with PowerPoint software to present the lesson material   Trainees require access to the following tools:   * VA TMS to complete the assessment * PowerPoint presentation Military References * Student Handout Military References |
| Pre-Planning | * Become familiar with all training materials by reading the Instructor Lesson Plan while simultaneously reviewing the corresponding PowerPoint slides. This will provide you the opportunity to see the connection between the Lesson Plan and the slides, which will allow for a more structured presentation during the training session. * Become familiar with the content of the trainee handouts and their association to the Lesson Plan. * Practice is the best guarantee of providing a quality presentation. At a minimum, do a complete walkthrough of the presentation to practice coordination between this Lesson Plan, the trainee handouts, and the PowerPoint slides and ensure your timing is on track with the length of the lesson. * Ensure that there are copies of all handouts before the training session. * When required, reserve the training room. * Arrange for equipment such as flip charts, an overhead projector, and any other equipment (as needed). * Talk to people in your office who are most familiar with this topic to collect experiences that you can include as examples in the lesson. * This lesson plan belongs to you. Feel free to highlight headings, key phrases, or other information to help the instruction flow smoothly. Feel free to add any notes or information that you need in the margins. |
| Training Day | * Arrive as early as possible to ensure access to the facility and computers. * Become familiar with the location of restrooms and other facilities that the trainees will require. * Test the computer and projector to ensure they are working properly. * Before class begins, open the PowerPoint presentation to the first slide. This will help to ensure the presentation is functioning properly. * Make sure that a whiteboard or flip chart and the associated markers are available. * The instructor completes a roll call attendance sheet or provides a sign-in sheet to the students. The attendance records are forwarded to the Regional Office Training Managers. |

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| Introduction to Military References | | | |
| INSTRUCTOR INTRODUCTION | | Complete the following:   * Introduce yourself * Orient learners to the facilities * Ensure that all learners have the required handouts | |
| time required | | 0.25 hour | |
| Purpose of Lesson  Explain the following: | | This lesson is intended to reinforce your online research skills in obtaining military references, to provide an understanding of military terms, and to provide context for facts or descriptions of events provided by claimants in statements supporting their claim. This lesson will contain discussions and exercises that will allow you to gain a better understanding of:   * Research Methodology * Citing Resources | |
| Lesson Objectives  Discuss the following:  Slide 2 | In order to accomplish the purpose of this lesson, the RVSR will be required to accomplish the following lesson objectives.  TheRVSRwill be able to:   * Demonstrate an understanding of research methodology * Demonstrate an understanding of the concept of credibility and bias * Demonstrate proper citation * Identify online military resources | | |
| Explain the following: | Each learning objective is covered in the associated topic. At the conclusion of the lesson, the learning objectives will be reviewed. | | |
| Motivation | Tell the students that sharpening their research skills will help them find the information they need to make accurate Rating Decisions quickly, which benefits the claimant and the regional office. | | |
| STAR Error code(s) | TBD | | |
| References  Slide 3 | Explain where these references are located in the workplace.   * Rating Job Aids – Military References & Links | | |
| Topic 1: Research Methodology | | | | |
| Introduction | | | | At the end of the topic, students will demonstrate through the practical exercise their understanding of credibility and bias as they relate to conducting online research for military references. |
| Time Required | | | | 0.25 hour |
| OBJECTIVES/ Teaching Points | | | | Topic objectives:   * Demonstrate understanding of credibility and bias while conducting online research for military references   The following topic teaching points support the topic objectives:   * Successful research is accomplished when the information obtained can verify or support evidence within a claim * The researcher is responsible for insuring information is credible and without bias * Compensation Services endorses information from all military (.mil) or government (.gov) sites |
| Research Methodology  Slide 4 | | | | When conducting research, the goal is to collect information regarding a particular subject. The internet affords a variety of resources for gaining valuable information regarding a range of different topics. Successful research is accomplished when the information obtained can verify or support evidence within a claim.  When using electronic resources, the information gained can be accurate and full of high quality information. |
| Credibility vs. Bias  Slide 5 | | | | Remind students that they should be aware that even when information is obtained from resources, from a deemed reputable library database such as Lexis-Nexis, articles or information contained within those databases or sites have potential to be biased. It is therefore the responsibility of the researcher to ascertain:  • if the resource or information is credible  • can it be used to support a credible resource, or  • if the site or information demonstrates bias.  Although some Weblogs and personal/corporate websites are factual and contain valuable information, others were created to lend credibility to inaccurate or unsubstantiated accounts of events.  Information obtained from these sites may be used to guide further research, but should be regarded carefully and with caution. It is important to remember that this information is unverified, but may provide enough additional information to make something verifiable.  Other sites may also have value, primarily, as a means to find “official” information.  Wikipedia is a free, web-based and collaborative multilingual encyclopedia that anyone can copy and edit for any purpose. It is a great place to gain an appreciation of a subject and to orient you, but the quality, quantity, depth, and breadth of articles available on certain subject matter varies. Since there can be bias, distortion, or gaps in information contained in these articles, they are best used as a framework from which to build upon the facts that are taken from verifiable and trusted sources.  Educational sites (.edu) may contain PDF file repositories of official military documents and provide a search function (i.e., Texas Tech University’s *Virtual Vietnam Archive*). |
| VA Endorsed Websites  Slide 6 | | | | Compensation Service endorses information from all military (.mil) or government (.gov) sites. |

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| Topic 2: Citing Resources | |
| Introduction | This topic will allow the trainee to properly cite those resources containing pertinent information used in the rating decision process. |
| Time Required | 0.25 hour |
| OBJECTIVES/ Teaching Points | Topic objectives:   * Identify online military resources that may be helpful in daily research.   The following topic teaching points support the topic objectives:   * Successful research is accomplished when the information obtained can verify or support evidence within a claim |
| Citing Resource  Slide 7 | Tell the students that after they have reviewed the online military resources and identified pertinent information, they should prepare a well-organized list of those that they plan to cite. This will provide a sense of how that information fits into their decision.  Remind them to:  • Stay focused on the premise behind their line of reasoning, and  • when writing their decision, to include the facts and supporting evidence from their research.  How to document research:  As pertinent information is obtained, keep track of the sources to be cited:  • Create one entry for each source  • Write a one-sentence overview/summary of the information obtained from that source and how it relates to your topic  • The basic form for citing online references in the Reasons and Bases section of a Rating Decision should include: the author, the title of the web page, the type of medium, the organization that posted it (if it is not the same as the name of the website). Also, include the date the page was created or last updated and the date you viewed it.  (Some addresses, directories, and files may lead to a search engine. However, the citation should contain enough specific information about the publication to retrieve it.)  • Use minimal punctuation - periods or commas may be mistaken for part of an electronic address  • If the file was obtained using a browser, use the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) |
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| Practical Exercise | |
| Time Required | 1 hour |
| EXERCISE | Military References Practical Exercise This test is located in the Student handout Ask if there are any questions about the information presented in the exercise, and then proceed to the Review. |
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| Lesson Review, Assessment, and Wrap-up | |
| Introduction  Discuss the following: | The Lesson Title lesson is complete.  Review each lesson objective and ask the trainees for any questions or comments. |
| Time Required | .25 hours |
| Lesson Objectives | You have completed the Lesson Title lesson.  The trainee should be able to:   * Demonstrate understanding of credibility and bias while conducting online research for military references |
| Assessment | Remind the trainees to complete the on-line assessment in TMS to receive credit for completion of the course.  The assessment will allow the participants to demonstrate their understanding of the information presented in this lesson. |