

## Sample Answer: Judging Credibility

|                                | Evidence that it may be credible   | Evidence that it may not be credible   |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| <i>Faithful representation</i> | <i>This account written by Douglas is a report (or Despatch) to the British Colonial Office on the actions he took to apprehend a murder suspect. In official reports to the Colonial Office he is expected to provide accurate information.</i> | <i>A conflict of interest is present; Douglas is expected to provide a truthful account of the expedition in the Despatch, yet he is also responsible for leading the expedition and capturing the accused without causing bloodshed or conflict. There is potential that Douglas might exaggerate the truth to portray his actions in a good light.</i>   |
| <i>Knowledgeable source</i>    | <i>Douglas is very well-informed about this event as he is the Governor of Vancouver Island responsible for maintaining peace and order, and he also led and was involved in every step of the expedition to capture the accused murderer.</i>   | <i>Because he didn't speak the Nanaimo dialect it is possible that he did not know or understand the Aboriginal perspective.</i>   |
| <i>Breadth of perspective</i>  | <i>As Governor, Douglas would likely have had considerable experience with Aboriginal people and Colonial justice.</i>   | <i>Douglas refers to the accused Nanaimo man as "wretched" and a "murderer" even though he has not been proven guilty. We might wonder whether Douglas had no other options but to threaten the entire Aboriginal community if the accused did not turn himself in. Douglas presumes to understand how the Aboriginal people might have viewed his actions, but doesn't actually check his impressions.</i>                |
| <i>Believability</i>           | <i>Internal details provided by Douglas are consistent throughout the account, and most of the facts are corroborated by the secondary account (Document B).</i>   | <i>Douglas does not mention the particulars of the negotiations with the Nanaimo tribe, and he tries to downplay the kidnapping of the Chiefs by referring to it as taking them "into custody." It is hard to imagine that after two days and the large military presence that there was no injury or molestation of the Nanaimo people. We don't know if the Nanaimo people had a different account of this incident.</i> |

**Overall conclusion**
 Definitely credible

 Probably credible

 Some questionable elements

 Not at all credible
**Support for overall conclusion:**

*Although Douglas likely intended to be truthful in his account, and the facts were corroborated by another source there was a conflict of interest that provides a motive for Douglas to manipulate the account. Although he was a highly knowledgeable source about the event, his social perspective and beliefs may have prejudiced the account in his favour. We learn of Douglas' account of this event, and have no idea if the Nanaimo people viewed the event in the same light.*