Cienega High School

BACKGROUND
Research makes up a large part of Chris Salvagio's classes at Cienega High School. He teaches AP Language and Composition and advises seniors on their "Senior Exit Projects" in which students compose a 10-page research paper addressing a critical issue within a career field of their choice.

PROBLEM
While Salvagio always strove to teach students source evaluation skills, students inevitably turned in papers riddled with questionable sources. He recalls, for example, the junior who, while writing a paper about gun control, cited an overinflated statistic about the proportion of domestic assault cases that were caused by home intruders. When Salvagio asked the student where he found that statistic, it turned out it had come from a website for a home security system, hawking questionable data to sell its products.

NEWSGUARD'S SOLUTION
Salvagio introduced NewsGuard to his students for the first time in 2019. He encouraged students to install the extension to aid their research process and requested that they reference NewsGuard's Nutrition Labels to justify why they had cited particular sources in their papers. When students began turning in drafts of their papers, not a single student used a questionable source, which Salvagio called "an extraordinary improvement from years prior." He also noted that none of the papers contained any assertions that were blatantly untrue, which had not been the case in semesters past.

How does NewsGuard help?
"Before, I would give students a checklist explaining what they needed to check for each source. For the most part, students wouldn't go through that whole process, and you can't blame them.

With NewsGuard, the information is there for the students. Kids don't really know the meaning of credibility and transparency, so having NewsGuard's criteria for each listed in a way that's accessible and easy to use helps, too, by helping us come up with a clear definition of what a reliable source is. NewsGuard really helped me buttress the things I've already taught before."

– Chris Salvagio, Cienega High School teacher

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