

# How to Evaluate Information

Below are questions you should ask when evaluating print sources and Web sites.

Criteria	What to look for in books and periodicals:	What to look for in Web sites:
<b>Currency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the information still the most recent on the topic?</li> <li>What is the copyright date of the publication?</li> <li>Is this the most recent edition?</li> <li>For periodicals, have you been given a time range to stay within by your professors?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the information current?</li> <li>When was the Web site published or created?</li> <li>When was the site last updated or revised?</li> <li>Do the links still connect?</li> <li>Is older content archived?</li> </ul>
<b>Authority</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who is the author?</li> <li>What are the author's credentials and reputation?</li> <li>What other works on the subject has the author written?</li> <li>Is the author an expert or researcher in the field?</li> <li>Has the author been cited by your instructor or in any other publications you have read?</li> <li>Does the author indicate the research methods used to obtain data?</li> <li>Scholarly journals are usually peer reviewed.</li> <li>Commercial publishers often have an established reputation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who is supplying the information:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An educational institution - .edu</li> <li>A government agency - .gov</li> <li>A commercial supplier - .com</li> <li>A non-profit organization - .org</li> </ul> </li> <li>Is the supplier reputable?</li> <li>Is there an author or contact person named? What are this person's credentials?</li> <li>Has this site been reviewed by experts or professional organizations?</li> </ul>
<b>Audience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who is the intended audience?</li> <li>Researchers or experts?</li> <li>Trade or professionals?</li> <li>The general public?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the site appropriate for your needs?</li> <li>Is it too technical?</li> <li>Is it too elementary?</li> <li>Is it too full of jargon?</li> </ul>
<b>Accuracy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the information still accurate?</li> <li>Can the information be verified or supported by other sources?</li> <li>Are sources of factual information cited?</li> <li>Has more information been developed on the topic?</li> <li>Does this information reflect the most recent or current thought on the topic?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are sources of information cited?</li> <li>Is the information complete and accurate?</li> <li>Are the links complete and accurate or are there discrepancies?</li> <li>Is selection criteria provided for the links used?</li> <li>Is the site free from grammar and typographical errors?</li> </ul>
<b>Point of View</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the source have a particular bias?</li> <li>Does it promote the ideas of a particular group - religious, political, etc.?</li> <li>Is it factual information or interpretations of the facts?</li> <li>Are there several points of view presented?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the information appear to be filtered or is it free from bias?</li> <li>Could the organization sponsoring the site have a stake in how the information is presented?</li> <li>Is the site free of advertisements?</li> <li>Are various points of view, theories, techniques, or schools of thought presented?</li> </ul>

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