

Evaluating Resources

When looking at a source, make sure you can check-off on all these criteria

For all Sources

AUTHORITY:

- Is there an Author? Is the contact information listed for the author?
- What are the author's credentials? Is the author cited by other scholars on this subject? Where does he/she work? What else has she/he written? Is she/he referenced by other scholars in the field?

CURRENCY:

- How important is it for your project to have the most recently published information?

ACCURACY:

- Does the author make clearly presented, logical arguments?
- Is the information detailed? Is there sufficient evidence to back up the arguments made?
- Is there a bibliography exhaustive (10 or more sources) and cite authoritative sources? Does the author acknowledge other scholarship, or situate themselves in the context of other literature written on the subject?
- Does the source present a particular bias?
- Are there graphics or charts included? Are they relevant and presented clearly?
- Is there original research presented?
- What is the author's purpose?

COVERAGE:

- Is the information detailed and provide substantial evidence? Does it add support for what you are arguing with your project, or offer a valid counter-argument?
- What is the target audience? Is it appropriate for your project?

WEBSITES:

- Is the online source coming from a database or a website anyone can access? (If the source is from a database, then the likelihood of the source is credible is much higher.)
- What is the URL of the website? (If it ends in .gov, .edu, or .org there is an increased likelihood the website is credible)
- Is the website sponsored by a credible organization or institution? What is the sponsor's stated philosophy?
- Is the page professionally presented, well written, and free from spelling and grammar mistakes?
- Are there links to other webpages? Are the links active? Do other websites link to this site?
- Is the information copied from another site?
- When was the webpage published? Has it been updated recently?

BOOKS:

- Who is the publisher?
- Are there book reviews of the book? Are the reviewers also notable scholars in this field? Do the reviews support the reliability and the validity of the book?

JOURNAL ARTICLES:

- Is the article scholarly? Where is the article published?

PRIMARY SOURCES

- Who is the author? What perspective does the author present?
- What was the author's experience and/or role with the event reported/documentated?
- Who is the targeted audience

(Other sources that present PRIMARY SOURCES)

- Who is responsible for the source presenting the primary source? If a webpage, what does the URL indicate about the site?
- What is the source's purpose in presenting a primary source?
- What is the format of the primary source?
- Is the document is a transcript, how was it originally transcribed, and is it accurate?