

Start Your Research

Research Process ❯

Your Topic ❯

Find Background Info

Sources: Find ❯

Articles ❯

Sources: Find Books

Evaluate Your Info

Cite Your Sources ❯

Evaluate, Write & ❯

Cite ❯

Evaluate Your Results

Evaluate your sources

Not all information is created equal!

Just being in print or available via the Internet doesn't guarantee that something is accurate or good research. When searching the Web, it's important to critically evaluate your search results:

- **Look for articles published in scholarly journals**
or sources that require certain standards or criteria be met before publication.
- **Look for materials at Web sites that focus on scholarly resources**
(e.g. Google Scholar)

- **Compare several opinions**
by scholars in your topic field, which is another way to verify or evaluate your sources.
- **Consult your instructor.**

CRAAP Test: Tips on Evaluating Sources

Some things to consider in evaluating the quality of research sources:

Currency: the timeliness of the information

- How recent is the information?
- Can you locate a date when the page(s) were written/created/updated?
- Based on your topic, is the information current enough?

Reliability: importance of the information

- What kind of information is included in the Web site?
- Is the content primarily fact, or opinion? Is the information balanced, or biased?
- Does the author provide references for quotations and data?
- If there are links, do they work?

Authority: the source of the information

- Can you determine who the author/creator is? is there a way to contact them?
- What are their credentials (education, affiliation, experience, etc.)?
- Who is the publisher or sponsor of the site? Are they reputable?

Accuracy: the reliability, truthfulness, and correctness of the information

- Is it accurate? Is it supported by evidence?
- Is the information balanced or biased?
- Was it peer-reviewed?
- Can you verify the information from another reliable source?
- Are there spelling, grammar, or typographical errors?
- Can you determine who the author/creator is? is there a way to contact them?

Purpose: the reason the information exists

- What's the intent of the Web site (to persuade, to sell you something, etc.)?
- What is the domain (.edu, .org, .com, etc.)?
- Are there ads on the Web site?
- How do they relate to the topic being covered (e.g., an ad for ammunition next to an article about firearms legislation)?
- Is the author presenting fact, or opinion? Who might benefit from a reader believing this Web site?
- Based on the writing style, who is the intended audience?

The [CRAAP Test](#) was developed by librarians at California State University, Chico.

Scholarly vs. Popular Articles

How can you tell the difference between a scholarly and popular article?



Scholarly or Peer-Reviewed Articles

- These are written by and for faculty, researchers, or scholars.
- They use scholarly or technical language and tend to be longer and include full citations for sources.
- They are peer-reviewed or refereed, which means articles are reviewed by other scholars before being published.



Popular Magazines and Newspapers Articles

- These are usually written by journalists or professional writers for a general audience and are shorter, with a broader overview.
- They are not evaluated by experts but by the magazine editors or staff.
- They usually lack citations for sources used.

For even more detailed help see our [Distinguish between Scholarly and Popular Journals guide](#).

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