Evaluating Sources

Use these questions to guide you in evaluating source you may be considering to use in a research paper.

➢ What is the purpose? Why was it written?

  • Is there a clear purpose stated in the first few sentences of the article, webpage or in the introduction to a book?
  • Does it convey information or is it meant to entertain?
  • Who will profit from what is written?

➢ Who is the author?

  • Does the page have a readily identifiable author or creator?
  • Does the author provide contact information?
  • Does a university press or society publish the material?
  • Was it peer reviewed? Did someone with authority approve this information?
  • Can the information be altered by you or any person?

➢ What authority or expertise does the author hold?

  • What academic or professional credentials does the author or creator possess?
  • Is this person qualified to write authoritatively on the subject?
  • Is it written by

➢ Does the author exhibit a bias toward the subject?

  • Opinion or fact? Are the sources cited (APA, MLA, etc)?
  • Is the page sponsored by an organization with an interest in deceiving readers?

➢ How current is the information?

  • Should have a publication date readily available