

## Evaluating Sources

The credibility of your research depends on the credibility of your sources. First consider the kind of resource you are consulting. This will help you to assess the quality: a source that is written to provide factual information has different characteristics than a source that presents expert opinion, or makes a case for a particular point of view.

<b>Format</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Book / eBook</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Encyclopedia</b> (Print or Online)	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Journal Article</b> (Print or Online)	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Audio</b> (Broadcast / Podcast)	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Film / Video</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Website</b>
<b>Author:</b>				<b>Publication Date:</b>		
<b>Title:</b>						
<b>Access Information</b> (i.e., Call #, Web Address, Database Source)						

### First determine the intended purpose and audience for the source:

<b>What is Its Purpose?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Was it written to inform, or to report on research?</li> <li>Does it summarize a body of research and provide citations, or is it reporting on new, original research?</li> <li>Was it written to persuade the audience or to sell a product?</li> </ul>	<b>Your observations:</b>
<b>Who is the Intended Audience?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is it written for a general audience?</li> <li>Is it written for a scholarly or professional audience?</li> </ul>	<b>Your observations:</b>

### Now assess the quality of the source by the following criteria:

CRITERIA	NOTES: YOUR ASSESSMENT
<b>Accuracy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the information up to date? When was it published?</li> <li>Can the facts be verified?</li> <li>Is the information still current or valid for your topic?</li> <li>Are conclusions and opinions backed up by solid evidence?</li> </ul>	
<b>Authority</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the author's qualifications?</li> <li>What experience does the author have in the field?</li> <li>Is the author part of an organization, agency, special interest group or corporation that might present a particular point of view?</li> </ul>	
<b>Completeness</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the topic covered in depth?</li> <li>Does the work answer your questions completely?</li> </ul>	
<b>Currency</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When was the work published?</li> <li>Is the information still current for your topic?</li> </ul>	
<b>Relevancy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the information relevant to your area of research and your research questions?</li> <li>Can you find the information that you need from this source?</li> </ul>	
<b>Perspective</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whose perspective on the topic or issues is included?</li> <li>Whose perspective on the topic or issues is excluded?</li> <li>Is there evidence of bias? (Note that opinion pieces are intended to express a particular bias: check whether opinions are backed up by solid evidence for these types of sources)</li> <li>Is there evidence of undue exaggeration, prejudice, over-generalization, or opinion misrepresented as fact?</li> </ul>	