

How to evaluate research sources

Click one of the links below or scroll through the document for questions to ask when evaluating articles, books, and websites:

- How to evaluate articles and journals
- How to evaluate books and book chapters
- How to evaluate websites



HOW TO EVALUATE ARTICLES AND JOURNALS

Ask yourself 6 key questions

WHAT?

What is the subject of the article?

Is it relevant to your research topic?

Does it add to the information you've
already found or provide a new
perspective?

WHEN?

When was the article published?

Is it recent enough for your research
needs?

WHY?

What is the purpose of the article?

Is it presenting research, making an
argument, or giving an opinion?

WHO?

Who wrote the article?

What credentials do they have?

Who is on the editorial board for the
journal?

What credentials do they have?

WHERE?

Which journal published the article?

Is the journal published by a
scholarly organization or academic
publisher?

Where was the research conducted?
Would research in another country
or region be relevant to your
research topic?

HOW?

How have the authors conducted
their research or made their
arguments?

Do they describe their research
methods and cite appropriate
sources?

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<http://library.northeastern.edu/ask>



HOW TO EVALUATE BOOKS AND BOOK CHAPTERS

Ask yourself 6 key questions

WHAT?

What is the subject of the book or chapter?

Is it relevant to your research topic?

Does it add to the information you've already found or provide a new perspective?

WHEN?

When was the book published?

Is it recent enough for your research needs?

WHY?

Why was this book or book chapter written-what is its purpose?

Is it presenting research, making an argument, or giving an opinion?

WHO?

Who wrote the book or book chapter?

What credentials do they have?

WHERE?

Where was the book or chapter published?

Was it published by a scholarly publisher, like the University of Oxford Press, or a commercial one, like Harper Collins?

HOW?

How have the authors conducted their research or made their arguments?

Do they describe their research methods and cite appropriate sources?

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HOW TO EVALUATE WEBSITES

Ask yourself 6 key questions

WHAT?

What is the subject of the website?

Is it geared toward a specific audience?

Does it have reasonably complete coverage of the topic? Are there obvious omissions?

WHEN?

When was the website last updated?

Are there dead links?

WHY?

Why was this site published-what is its purpose?

Is the site's purpose to inform, persuade or present a call to action?

WHO?

Who wrote the site's content?

What credentials do they have?

WHERE?

Where was this site published?

Was it published on a .edu or .gov site, or is it from a particular country, like India (.in) or Canada (.ca)?

HOW?

Does the site explain how the authors collected or analyzed the material presented?

Did they collect or analyze the information themselves, or are they reporting on work done by others?

Have they properly attributed non-original content on the site?

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