

Can your source get past the RADAR?



Evaluate your sources using the RADAR criteria (**R**eadon, **A**uthority, **D**ate, **A**ccuracy and **R**elevance) to assess their quality. Use this worksheet to remember what questions you should be asking yourself before using a source!

<p>Reason</p>	<p>All sources of information are created for a specific reason: to educate, entertain, sell a product, promote a certain point of view, etc. Knowing why your source was made will help you avoid biased or misleading information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you identify your source’s purpose? • Who is its intended audience (the general public, scholars, voters, etc.)? • Is the information presented fact or opinion? Is it propaganda? • Can you identify any obvious bias or prejudice in the source?
<p>Authority</p>	<p>A source of good authority is a source that was created by a person, organization or agency with the qualifications and knowledge to do so.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the authors/sponsors of the source clearly identified? • What are their credentials? • Are they qualified to write on this topic?
<p>Date</p>	<p>The date of a source is important since new discoveries happen all the time in the world of academic research. Using recent information is thus usually a good thing, although it is not necessarily mandatory.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When was your source published or updated? • Are newer sources on the topic available? Do they agree with the older ones? • Is your subject part of a field that evolves quickly (like technology)?
<p>Accuracy</p>	<p>An accurate source contains correct information and solid arguments. It can be hard to tell if a source is accurate; journal articles are often evaluated in a process called peer-review to ensure their quality. Sadly, no equivalent exists for web sources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there statements you know to be false in the text? • Is the information backed up by sources? If so, are they interpreted correctly? • Was the source published by a peer-reviewed journal, academic press or some other reliable publisher?
<p>Relevance</p>	<p>To be useful in your research, a source has to be relevant to it by providing pertinent information on your subject. Remember to keep an open mind: a source that’s not quite about your research topic can still contain worthwhile information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the source about your topic? How do you plan to use the information in it? • Is the source the right type for your assignment (book, article, website, etc.)? • Is it at the right reading level? • Did you look at other sources before choosing this one?