

# Determining Relevance and Credibility of Sources Reference Sheet

When doing research, ask yourself these questions to determine whether a source is relevant and credible.

- relevant: closely connected or appropriate to support the idea
- credible: believable; trustworthy

Criteria	How to determine if a source qualifies
<p><b>Usefulness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Is the source relevant to your topic?</li> <li>● Does the source provide evidence to support its claims?</li> <li>● Is the source easy to understand?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Read a summary of the text if available, such as the one on the back of a book</li> <li>● Look at titles, subheadings, and other text features</li> <li>● Skim through the text</li> <li>● Look through the index to see if your specific topic is present (for longer texts)</li> <li>● Assess how information is conveyed to determine whether the source is an appropriate length, medium, and/or level of complexity</li> </ul>
<p><b>Medium</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Does the type of source serve your purposes?</li> <li>● How recently was the source published?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Consider whether the source is primary or secondary, and whether that fits your research purposes</li> <li>● Look for the publication date</li> <li>● Consider whether newer information might exist on the topic</li> </ul>
<p><b>Author/Publisher</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Are the author and publisher of the source established, respected, and trustworthy?</li> <li>● Why has the author created this resource?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Determine whether the author is an expert on the topic</li> <li>● Google the author to see what else they have written</li> <li>● Google the source/publisher to see what else they have published</li> <li>● Consider whether the author is trying to inform the reader, persuade them, entertain them, or sell them something</li> </ul>
<p><b>Accuracy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Can the information provided by the source be verified elsewhere?</li> <li>● Does the source meet standards of professionalism?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Look for a bibliography or citations of other works</li> <li>● Look for quoted evidence</li> <li>● Verify evidence by investigating whether other sources say similar things</li> <li>● Consider whether the source has provided information on both sides of an issue</li> <li>● Determine whether the source is written in an appropriate tone and free of spelling and grammatical errors</li> </ul>