

## Evaluating Sources: The CRAAP Test

Adapted from the Meriam Library California State University, Chico

[http://www.csuchico.edu/lins/bandouts/eval\\_websites.pdf](http://www.csuchico.edu/lins/bandouts/eval_websites.pdf)

## Additional Guidelines for Evaluating Sources

Determine which sources are valuable to the project, and which should be replaced with better sources.

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**Currency:** When the source was published or made available online

- In what year was the source published?
- Has the information been updated, revised, or commented upon since its initial publication?
- Does your topic (e.g., medical research, technology, current events) require current information?

- Especially if the topic is time-sensitive, mark any sources that may be outdated. (Older sources are often valuable, but most of your sources should be from the last ten years, or even more recent depending on the topic.)

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**Relevance:** The importance of the information to your specific topic

- Does the information relate directly to your topic?
- Who is the intended audience of the source? Does it align with your audience?
- Is the information appropriately sophisticated for your purposes (i.e., is the article or website too elementary or too advanced for your intended audience?)
- Would you be comfortable citing this in your own paper?

- Mark any sources that don't seem as if they will answer your research questions, and note why they don't seem as if they will provide an answer.
- Mark any sources that are more like opinion pieces than systematic studies. (These are useful for studying opinions, but you mostly want sources that make claims which can be proved or disproved. Provable statements will usually carry more weight in your argument than opinions.)

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**Authority:** Who is providing this information?

- Who is the author, the publisher, the organization, the sponsor?
- What are the author's credentials? Are they affiliated with a research institution?
- Is there contact information, such as email addresses, publisher contact information, etc.?
- If it's a website, check the URL: .com, .edu, .gov, .org, .net (which can say something about the source)

- Mark any popular sources (news, television, most books not from academic/university publishers, most websites), as opposed to academic sources (peer-reviewed academic journals, most books from academic/university publishers, some research databases, some digital archives). Academic sources tend to be more reliable, precise, and are usually the first source for original research. Popular sources often summarize and simplify research that has previously been published in academic sources.

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**Accuracy:** The reliability, verifiability, and correctness of the information

- Where does the information come from?
- Is the information supported by evidence?
- Has this information been referred or reviewed?
- Check the tone: does it seem biased or unduly invested in the topic?
- Are there any inappropriate word choices?
- Are there any spelling or grammar errors?

- Mark any sources that might be unreliable (*National Enquirer*, Wikipedia, the blog of a non-expert).

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**Purpose:** The reason this information exists.

- What is the author's goal for this piece? To inform, persuade, entertain, sell?
- Is the author's intention clear?
- Does the point of view appear objective or impartial?

- The writer's listed sources may only give one side of an issue. Suggest opposing views, different disciplinary approaches or angles/perspectives that the writer could look for in other sources. (If the writer has listed a source that argues for lower speed limits, suggest they find a source that argues for higher speed limits.)