

# EVALUATING SOURCES



Use this tip sheet to determine the reliability and usefulness of an information source



## **RELEVANCE** *What is it about?*

- Examine title, abstract, and subject headings for connections to your research.



## **AUTHORITY** *Who created it?*

- Research the reputation of the magazine, journal, or publisher.
- Locate and verify author credentials and affiliation(s).
- Identify parent organizations and funding sources.



## **ACCURACY** *Is it reliable?*

- Investigate whether conclusions are well-reasoned and supported with evidence.
- Verify information with another reputable source.



## **PURPOSE** *Why was it written?*

- Identify the intention of the source (to inform, persuade, etc.) to help detect potential bias.
- Identify intended audience (scholars, public, professionals).
- Inspect for author bias (e.g., omitting important information).



## **TIMELINESS** *When was it created?*

- Identify both when the research was conducted and the date of publication.
- Decide whether dates affect usefulness for your research.