

EVALUATING SOURCES: CRAAP TEST

CRAAP TEST

To sort through all the available information to determine what's appropriate for your writing task, you might start with the CRAAP Test. Use the checklist below to evaluate the usefulness and suitability of your sources.

Remember that not every element of the CRAAP Test is equally important in all rhetorical situations or for all writing tasks! Part of your job is finding out which criteria matter most for the task in front of you.

IS THE SOURCE CURRENT?

How recently was the source published, created, or uploaded, and is that reasonable for your topic?

- Are recent sources necessary for your project?
- How recently was the source material published?
- Is there a later edition?
- When was the source material last revised or updated?
- Do the links work?

IS THE SOURCE RELEVANT?

How well does the information relate to your topic or research question?

- What does the source material add to your project?
- What questions will the source material help you answer?
- What claims will the source material help you establish?
- Have you also looked at other sources before deciding on this one?
- Who is the anticipated audience for the source material?
- Is the source material appropriately simple/complex for the writing task and audience?
- How would your instructor react if you used this source?

IS THE SOURCE ACCURATE?

How reliable is the source material?

- From where does the source material come?
- Did the source material come from a referred journal or academic press?
- Can you find the information you'll be using in another authoritative source?
- Is the source material's tone objective?

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- Are there spelling or grammar errors?
- Does the layout help you find material?

IS THE SOURCE AUTHORITATIVE?

Where does the information in the source come from, and can it be trusted?

- Is the author/creator/organization a recognized authority in the field or discipline?
- What is the author/creator/organization's credentials in this field?
- Does the source material provide a way to contact the author/creator/organization, either through an email address or a publisher?
- What does the URL reveal about the source of the material?
 - .gov = government
 - .com/.net = commercial
 - .edu = educational

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE SOURCE?

Why was this information put together, published, or uploaded?

- Was it for commercial purposes? Was it intended to persuade?
- Does the author/creator/organization reveal their purpose, or do they attempt to hide it?
- Does it include emotional appeals? If so, are they appropriate?
- Are any biases apparent? Racial/ethnic? Religious? Gender-based? Political? Ideological? Institutional? Personal?