

# **EVALUATING SOURCES**

When conducting research for a paper, it is important to evaluate each source for and to ensure that the facts and arguments you use in your paper are well-supported. You might also refer to our handout for a breakdown of the kinds of sources writers use.

# RELEVANCE

The first step in evaluating a source is to determine if that source supports your purpose for writing. You might use sources to help answer your research questions, provide background information, establish a claim, or introduce an opposing viewpoint. Once you have established that a source is useful and relevant to your paper, then you can evaluate the source for reliability.

# RELIABILITY

The three criteria below can help you identify if your source is reliable, or valid, for your paper's purpose:

### Authority

If the of a source is credible, using their work to support your ideas gives your paper credibility. A researcher or reporter may have different qualifications and perspectives to offer, but it is important to assess whether the author has the expertise required to accurately write about a topic. For ex

### Accuracy

Including

and current information in your paper gives your paper credibility. To determine a source's accuracy, examine what type(s) of evidence they use and where they found it. You might do a bit of research to see if other reliable sources are presenting the same information. The type of source can also give you a general idea about the accuracy of the information it contains. Academic journals are peer-reviewed and newspapers fact-check their information before publishing, so those sources might be more accurate than a personal blog.



