



Evaluating Sources

How can you tell if a source is reliable? This worksheet will guide you through questions to consider and strategies for digging deeper. If you're ever in doubt about a source, remember you can always contact your friendly librarian for help!

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

Whether you're conducting research for class, or just scrolling through a social media site and debating whether to share an article a friend posted, there are certain questions you should always ask yourself in order to determine the credibility of the information being presented.

- Who is the author? What makes them an authority to speak on this topic? What are their biases?
- What is the publication? What is their mission and editorial process? What are their biases?
- What citations are included? Does this source accurately represent the cited sources? What citations are missing?
- Who shared this source? Why did they share it? What are their biases?
- Who reacted (liked, retweeted, etc.) to this source? What are their biases?
- What are my previous experiences with this topic? What are my biases?

TIPS & TRICKS

Feeling stuck? Check out these strategies and resources to help you as you evaluate:

- Reverse image search:** the internet is full of photoshopped images. If you want to find the original version of an image making the rounds, you can use "reverse image search." This helps track down the first time the image was shared, allowing you to see if it's been altered along the way.
 - Directions on reverse image searching in Google:
<https://support.google.com/websearch/answer/1325808?hl=en>
- Fact-checking websites:** fact-checkers examine everything from urban legends to political speeches, tracing down the origins and veracity of claims. They include citations to their research, so you can follow the links

and assess the information for yourself, too.

- ❑ Snopes: <https://www.snopes.com/>
- ❑ Politifact: <https://www.politifact.com/>
- ❑ **Ulrichs Periodical Directory:** This database, available through UMD Libraries, tracks which journals are “refereed” (peer-reviewed). Search a journal title, then hover over the icons on the left-hand side of the search results to determine whether a journal has a peer-review process.
 - ❑ Ulrichs: <https://www.lib.umd.edu/dbfinder/id/UMD01769>
- ❑ **Subject Specialists:** UMD Libraries have subject specialists (librarians specializing in a specific discipline) for each major on campus. If you’re struggling to evaluate a source, reach out to the librarian specializing in that source’s area!
 - ❑ Subject Specialist Directory:
<https://www.lib.umd.edu/directory/specialists>