



# Wichita State University Libraries

## Evaluating Print Information Sources

Researchers need to evaluate information sources for **relevancy**, **reliability** and **objectivity**. Use this checklist to help you judge the quality of print information sources such as books, periodicals, etc.

<b>Author's Qualifications or Credentials</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Can't tell</b>
Is there an identifiable author?			
Can you determine the author's occupation, position or affiliation from the information provided?			
Can you determine if the author is professional working in the field?			
Can you determine the author's educational background?			
Do you think the author is qualified to write this article or book?			

<b>Presentation</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Can't tell</b>
Is the purpose or need for the research clearly stated?			
Is the author's methodology stated in sufficient detail to be replicated?			
Does the author provide supporting evidence to back up facts, hypotheses or arguments?			
Are charts, graphs, photos, maps, etc., included to illustrate important points? Do they support the research?			

<b>Methodology - What methods were used to obtain data?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Can't tell</b>
Personal opinion, experience or observation?			
Interviews?			
Original research?			
Questionnaires?			
Library Research?			
Lab experiments?			

<b>Timeliness</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Can't tell</b>
Is the date of publication a factor in your research?			
If your topic is current, is the information in the publication recent enough to be relevant?			

<b>Length</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Can't tell</b>
Is the length of the publication appropriate to the level of research? (A longer article/chapter <b>may</b> provide more in-depth coverage.)			

<b>Bias or objectivity</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Can't Tell</b>
Does the <b>author</b> have a particular point of view--religious, political, cultural or professional--that might bias his/her findings or cause the information to be presented in a particular light?			
Does the author use emotional language--words that are intended to evoke a positive or negative emotion from the reader?			
Does the <b>publisher</b> represent a particular group or bias?			
Is the publication intended to present factual information?			
Is the publication intended to persuade you to think in a certain way?			

<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Can't tell</b>
Are conclusions drawn?			
Are they logical and appropriate to the research?			
Is their significance clear?			
Are they justified by the research?			
Are they skewed by bias?			

<b>Publishing Information</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Can't tell</b>
Can you identify the publisher?			
Do you know anything about its reputation?			
Can you determine the intended audience for the publication--the general public, a student, an expert in the field?			
Is the item published by a professional association, or a popular press?			
<b>Periodical:</b> Is it an authoritative publication? ( <i>Journal of Marriage and the Family</i> would likely be more authoritative than <i>Ladies Home Journal</i> ).			
<b>Periodical:</b> Are articles reviewed (or "refereed") by experts in the field prior to publication?			

<b>Documentation</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Can't tell</b>
Is a bibliography provided which shows where the author obtained his/her information?			
Are the sources listed in the bibliography scholarly?			
Are they up-to-date?			
Are they appropriate to the type of research performed?			