

Website Evaluation for High School Research

Authority: Who is taking responsibility for the information? If you can't figure it out, do not use the website. Use the following links: "About Us," "FAQ," "Background," etc. You may need to do a little digging to find an author's credentials or other publications. "Google" the author if necessary.

	YES	NO
Is the website sponsor or institution clearly identified?		
Is there an author identified?		
If there is an author, has he or she provided contact information (name, email or physical address, phone number)?		

Purpose: Looking at the URL of a site will help you decide its purpose. Is its purpose to entertain, inform, generate profit?

	YES	NO
Based on its domain (.com, .edu, .gov, .org) have you looked over the website carefully? Different domains serve different purposes: blogs often use .org and may be biased; .gov websites provide facts, data, and statistics; .coms will have a lot of ads so assess them carefully; education entities are associated with .edu but make sure it is a legitimate academic institution.		
Does the website avoid trying to persuade or sell you something? (bias)		
Is the information on the site relevant to your needs?		

Objectivity: The author and/or organization presenting the information will help you determine the website's usefulness. Make sure it's not trying to manipulate your point of view.

	YES	NO
Does the website avoid advertising that may be a conflict of interest with its content?		
If a controversial issue is presented, are both perspectives addressed?		
Do you trust the author or organization associated with the website?		

Accuracy: Anyone can create and publish a website. Ask yourself these questions to determine if the information presented is verifiable.

	YES	NO
Based on your prior research and reading, does the information presented on the site seem accurate?		
Is factual information referenced or presented as "further readings" or "resources?"		
Are there few spelling and grammar mistakes?		
Are there additional links to other reliable websites?		

Currency: We want information that is up-to-date.

	YES	NO
Does the information have a copyright date?		
Does the website have a date associated with its creation or most recent update?		
Is currency important considering your topic?		
Does the site have any broken links? Broken links may mean the site has been abandoned and not regularly updated.		

When in doubt, ask!