

**Evaluating Articles**

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| **Criteria** | **Questions to Ask** | **What to Look For** |
| **Author /****Authority /** **Accuracy** | * Who is the author? Is the author well known?
* Is the author an expert in this subject area?
* Are the author’s credentials provided (education/degrees, work experience, awards/honors)?
* Is the article unsigned? (Author not identified)
* What sources did the author use? How many sources were used?
* Has the author published other articles or books?
* Is the article peer-reviewed?
 | * Read the abstract, introduction and/or conclusion.
* Look for information about the author in the beginning or end of an article.
* Google the author’s name.
* Check for the presence of: a bibliography at the end of the article; endnotes or footnotes. The amount and type of references used help determine the value of an article and help you verify the facts and conclusions presented.
* Search the library catalog, library databases, Google Scholar, WorldCat.org and Amazon.com to determine if the author has written other articles or books.
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| **Publisher** | * Who is the publisher? Is the publisher well known?
* Is it a commercial publisher, scholarly or university publisher, professional association, research center or a government agency?
* Does the publisher stand to benefit from the research or argument presented in the article?
 | * Google the title of the journal, magazine or newspaper and review the publisher’s website including the *About* page.
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| **Purpose /** **Objectivity** | * Why was the article written?
* Is the article intended to inform/explain, sell/promote, entertain or persuade?
* Does the article show political, cultural or other bias? Are opposing points of view represented?
* Is the author affiliated with a company, institution or organization?
* Does the author stand to benefit from the research or argument presented in the article?
 | * Read the abstract, introduction and/or conclusion.
* Check the background/reputation of the author in biographical sources.
* You may not be able to evaluate the objectivity of an article until you have reviewed multiple resources in this subject area.
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| **Criteria** | **Questions to Ask** | **What to Look For** |
| **Audience** | * Who is the intended audience: scholars/specialists, students, or the general public?
* Is the information written at a level you can understand and use?
 | * Is the vocabulary too technical or scholarly for your purposes? Do you need to look up unfamiliar terms in a dictionary?
* Is the vocabulary too elementary for college-level research?
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| **Currency** | * Do you need up-to-date information on a timely issue or event?
* Do you need a current perspective on an older issue or event?
* Do you need a first-hand account of an event from the time it actually happened?
 | * Check the publication date of the article. For print articles, the date is usually listed on the front cover of a journal, magazine or newspaper issue. For online articles, the date is usually listed near the top of a web page or database record
* Check the publication dates of sources used/listed in the article.
* Read the abstract and/or introduction.
* Remember that scholarly journal articles can take two or more years to publish from the time an event or discovery occurs. In the areas of health, technology, and science, currency is important. Currency is less important for biographies and articles covering the history of a particular subject.
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| **Content /** **Relevance /****Usefulness** | * Is the article detailed/comprehensive on a topic, provide an overview of a topic, or provide a unique perspective on a topic?
* Does the article include original research or a first-hand account of an event or discovery?
* Is the source a secondary account (analysis, interpretation) of original research or events?
* Does the article address a subject from a specific time period or geographic location?
* Does the whole article or sections of the article address the topic you are researching?
* Does the article support or refute an argument?
* Does the article provide background information/an overview of the subject, ideas, opinions, case studies, examples, research results or statistics you can use to support your thesis?
 | * Review the title and the subtitle of the article.
* For an online article, review the subject headings assigned to the article.
* Read the abstract, introduction and/or conclusion.
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