

I found this source for my paper. Do you think I should use it?

Have you
P.R.O.V.E.N.
that it is credible?



This list of questions will help you to think critically while you evaluate the sources you find.

Purpose: How and why the source was created.

- How and why did the authors publish this information? Is it intended to educate, inform, persuade, sell, or entertain? Do the authors, publishers, or sponsors state this purpose, or try to disguise it?
- Why was this information published in this particular type of source (book, article, website, blog, etc.)?
- Who is the intended audience? Is the source designed for the general public, students, or experts?

Relevance: The value of the source for your needs.

- Is the type of source appropriate for how you plan to use it, and for your assignment's requirements?
- How useful is the information in this source, compared to other sources? Does it answer your question or support your argument? Does it add something new and important to your knowledge of the topic?
- How detailed is the information? Is it too general or too specific? Is it too basic or too advanced?

Objectivity: The reasonableness and completeness of the information.

- Do the authors present the information thoroughly and professionally? Do they critique other perspectives respectfully? Do they use strong, emotional, manipulative, or offensive language?
- Do the authors, publishers, or sponsors have a particular political, ideological, cultural, or religious point of view? Do they acknowledge this point of view, or try to disguise it?
- Is the information fact or opinion? Is it biased? Does the source present multiple points of view on the topic? Does it leave out, or make fun of, important facts or alternative perspectives?

Verifiability: The accuracy and truthfulness of the information.

- Do the authors support the information they present with strong factual evidence? Do they cite or provide links to other sources? Do those sources pass the P.R.O.V.E.N. test?
- What do experts say about the topic? Can you verify the information in other credible sources?
- Does the source contradict itself, include false statements, or misrepresent other sources?
- Are there errors in spelling, punctuation, or grammar?

Expertise: The authority of the creators of the source.

- What makes the authors, publishers, or sponsors of the source authorities on the topic? Do they have related education, personal or professional experience, or other expertise? Are they affiliated with an educational institution or respected organization? Is their expertise acknowledged by other authorities on the topic? Do they provide an important alternative perspective? Do other sources cite this source?
- Has the source been reviewed in some way, such as by an editor or through peer review?
- Does the source provide contact information for the authors, publishers, and/or sponsors?

Newness: The age of the information.

- Is your topic in an area that requires current information (such as science, technology, or current events), or could information found in older sources still be useful and valid?
- When was the information presented in the source first published or posted? Are the references or links to other sources up to date?
- Are newer sources available that would add important information to your understanding of the topic?

