

Evaluating Sources of Print Information

Author (Authority)	<p>Author's credentials? <u>Biographical resources:</u> Electronic Databases: <i>GaleNet (includes Contemporary Authors)</i>, <i>LEXIS-NEXIS</i> <u>In print:</u> Who's Who... (under various subtitles) American Men & Women of Science, and many others--check library catalog.</p>	<p>Expertise on the subject? Check critical review(s) – <u>Electronic Databases</u> at FGCU: Book Review Digest, Library Literature, Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe, ProQuest Direct <u>In print:</u> New York Times Book Review</p>
Documentation & ease of use	<p>Does the resource have a bibliography? Does the author refer to other works? Does the author support his/her arguments? Look for a bibliography (references) at the end of the book or at each chapter.</p>	<p>Does the resource have an index? Look at the back of the book. Does the index help you to easily find the needed information?</p>
Timeliness	<p>When was the source published? Look for the date on the face of the title page or look for it in the copyright, or look up the book in the library's catalog.</p>	<p>Is the information still relevant? Date of publication is usually more important in the sciences. In the humanities and historical documents, it can be less important.</p>
Edition	<p>Why check a book's edition? Further editions generally indicate that the source has been revised and updated. It may also mean that the source has become a standard and is reliable.</p>	<p>How do you check a book's edition? Look up the book in the library's catalog. Check the title and/or copyright page.</p>
Publisher	<p>Academic (university) publishers can be a measure of credibility. Their published titles are often scholarly. Check for the publisher's name on the book's spine, the title and/or copyright page. Academic Press, Blackwell Publishers, Johns Hopkins University Press, John Wiley & Sons, Prentice Hall, University Press of Florida, W. B. Saunders & many others</p>	<p>The popular presses often print fiction but they also publish titles that are credible resources. Check for the publisher's name on the book's spine, the title and/or copyright page. Countryman Press, Crown Publishing, Doubleday, Houghton Mifflin Company, Knopf, Putnam, Random House, & many others</p>
Purpose	<p>What is the purpose of the resource? Inform: popular or scholarly subject Persuade: balanced or biased Entertain Sell a product</p>	<p>Who is its intended audience? General audience Informed reader Scholar Professional in the field</p>
Suitability	<p>Does the resource have the information you need? Look through the table of contents. Search the index. Read through some of the text.</p>	<p>Is the material written at a level you can understand? Is the information too general? Is the information too technical?</p>
Format	<p>Books: Covered in this document. Periodicals: see Identifying Scholarly Journals, Magazines & Trade Publications Video: Check the library's catalog for publisher, writer, sponsoring organization, credits, consultant(s). Web: see Evaluating Web Information</p>	