Evaluating Resources

Below is a checklist of things you can do to determine whether a print or online resource is a reputable source of information.

Author:

✓ Can you identify the author?
✓ Does the item or website include biographical or contact information?
✓ What is the author’s educational background?
✓ Is the author associated with a reputable university or organization?
✓ Have you seen this author’s work cited by others?
✓ Has the author’s work appeared in scholarly publications?
✓ Has the author published multiple articles or books on the topic?

Content:

✓ Is the information accurate?
✓ Is it current enough for your purposes?
✓ Is the content well-documented?
✓ Has the information been peer-reviewed?

Bias:

✓ Can you identify the author’s purpose in creating this document?
✓ Is the tone of the writing objective?
✓ If the author has a bias, is it clearly expressed?
✓ Who is the publisher?
✓ If a Web site, what type of organization created the site (commercial, educational, etc.)?

Presentation:

✓ Is the material well-organized?
✓ Is it presented in a professional manner?
✓ If a Web site, is contact information available?