

Evaluating Sources Using the CARP Test

The CARP Test is a way to evaluate information sources based on the following criteria: **Currency, Authority, Relevance & Reliability, and Purpose/Point of View**. Use the questions below to determine whether a source is providing quality information — or if something seems a little “fishy”...

CURRENCY

1. When was the information published or posted?
2. Has the information been revised or updated? When?
3. Does your topic require current information, or will older sources work as well?
4. Websites – are the links functional?

AUTHORITY

1. Who is the author/creator?
2. What are their credentials? Are they qualified to write about this topic? Can they be contacted?
3. Are they affiliated with any groups or organizations?
4. Who is the publisher or sponsor?

RELEVANCE & RELIABILITY

1. Does the information relate to your topic or help answer your question? (Note: this doesn't mean that the information agrees with your argument)
2. Is the information at the appropriate level for your research?
3. Who is the intended audience?
4. Where does the information come from? Does the author provide references or sources?
5. Has the information been reviewed or refereed? By whom?
6. Do you feel comfortable using this source in your research? Would your teacher accept it?

PURPOSE/POINT OF VIEW

1. What is the information meant to do to the reader?
 - Inform, teach, sell, entertain, persuade?
2. Does the author or sponsor clearly state their intentions or purpose?
3. Is the information fact or opinion? Propaganda?
4. Does the point of view seem to be objective and impartial?
5. What biases might the author or sponsor have?
 - Political, ideological, cultural, religious, institutional, personal?
6. Are there any ads? How do they relate to the topic being covered?
7. Websites – what does the URL and/or domain tell you about the purpose?
 - Examples: **.com** – commercial; **.edu** – educational; **.gov** – government; **.org** – organization (but what kind of organization are they?)

From Northwest University Library: <http://library.northwestu.edu/carp-test/>