

# Logic and Research: Skills Inventory

## <http://commons.esc.edu/informationkills/>

- Empire State College
- Series of pages in a website, devoted to helping you use critical thinking and logic to evaluate source material for research papers
- The six phase approach to research writing:
  1. Get ready and decide on a topic
  2. Get background information
  3. Find books
  4. Find articles
  5. Find web sources
  6. Evaluate and cite your sources

# Each of the six phases has links in the ESC website linked in our class:

1. Get ready and decide on a topic:

[https://commons.esc.edu/information\\_skills/develop-topic/decide-topic/](https://commons.esc.edu/information_skills/develop-topic/decide-topic/)

2. Get background information:

[https://commons.esc.edu/information\\_skills/develop-topic/reference](https://commons.esc.edu/information_skills/develop-topic/reference)

3. Find books: At VSU, use Odum Library's GIL and Galileo

[https://commons.esc.edu/information\\_skills/do-search/outside-sources/](https://commons.esc.edu/information_skills/do-search/outside-sources/)

4. Find articles: Keywords and Concept Charts

[https://commons.esc.edu/information\\_skills/do-search/identify-keywords/](https://commons.esc.edu/information_skills/do-search/identify-keywords/)

5. Find web sources:

<https://support.google.com/websearch/?hl=en&guide=1221265&answer=136861&rd=1#topic=3378866>

6. Evaluate and cite your sources:

[https://commons.esc.edu/information\\_skills/evaluate/](https://commons.esc.edu/information_skills/evaluate/)

Evaluating information for research is just a specialized, advanced form of the same critical thinking skills you already use.

- No source of information is guaranteed to be trustworthy. You always need to use your own educated judgment, even with scholarly articles from library databases.
- Some sources of information are more trustworthy than others, but it's hard to tell from appearances.
- Evaluating information using critical thinking will save time and effort by filtering out materials you can't use.
- Your critical thinking will show up in your writing and you will get better grades.

# TRAP

(abbreviation for four major ways to evaluate source materials)

- Timeliness
- Reliability
- Accountability
- Perspective (and Purpose)

# Timeliness

- How recent and up to date is this information?
- Is the date of the material appropriate to the type of research you're conducting?

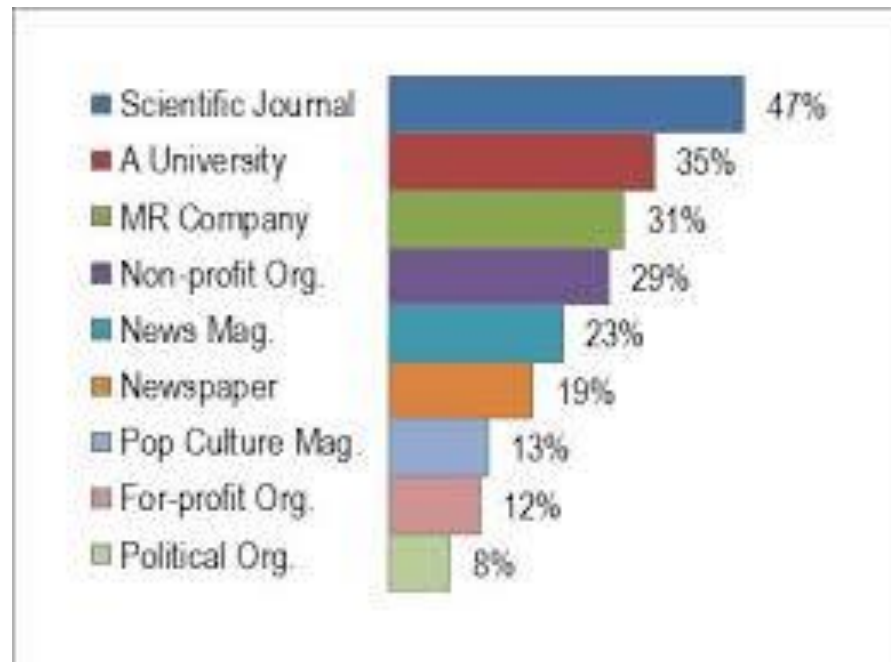


# Reliability

Can you determine the source of this information?

Can you tell what research methods were used?

Is the publication scholarly (peer reviewed?)



# Authority

- Can you tell who created/published it?
- What are their credentials or qualifications to be writing on this topic?
  - Is the source a current faculty member at a major university?
  - Are they acknowledged by other academics?
  - Is their research thorough?
  - Is their research cited and discussed by peers (even if they disagree on some points?)

# Perspective (and Purpose)

- Is the purpose to inform, entertain or persuade?
- To misinform or manipulate (propaganda)?
- What are potential sources of bias?
- Can you discern an agenda?
  - Websites and blogs written from a particular political view are often biased, and do not consider the other side of the debate
  - Academic journal articles should be ‘peer reviewed’ by a board of editors, so that each article published has been vetted by other scholars
  - If you aren’t sure a journal article source is peer reviewed, use the Ulrich’s database in Galileo
  - Books published by a major university press or a leading academic publisher will be more reliable than those from private publishers or those that are self-published

# Proofreading Skills

- <http://study.com/academy/lesson/how-to-proofread-an-essay-for-spelling-and-grammar.html>

# Simon Peyton Jones on How To Write A Great Research Paper

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g3dkRsTqdDA>

# In honor of the Undergraduate Research Symposium this week:

- **How to write a research abstract, from Michigan State:**
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XqeIjRB3EU>
- **How to prepare a research poster, from Michigan State:**
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SATl29FeFw0>
- **George Hess on giving an effective poster presentation (with some funny examples of what not to do)**
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMSaFUrk-FA>