

Tips and Strategies for Evaluating Resources

Things to Consider When Evaluating Resources

1. Quantity

Enough resources are needed to:

- Support your argument
- Include a variety of viewpoints and materials

2. Diversity

Variety is necessary. Include many different resources.

- Primary Sources
 - Contemporary accounts of an event and original documents
 - Examples: letters, diaries, audio recordings of speeches, newspaper articles
- Secondary Resources
 - Retrospective sources based on primary resources; include scientific or scholarly analysis
 - Examples: books, articles, editorials, reviews, scientific studies
- Finding Primary Source Materials
 - [Materials located in the CFCC Library](#)
 - [Materials located on the Internet](#)

3. Date of Publication

When was the source published? Depending on the topic of research different materials from different time periods will be used.

- Current Events Research - Use resources that are recent and reflect current attitudes.
- Historical Research - Use a variety of resources from different time periods including both Primary and Secondary resources.

4. Quality and Reliability

When choosing your resources, the most difficult task is determining their quality and reliability. This is particularly problematic when a source is found through the Internet. Some factors to think about when assessing the quality and reliability of a publication are:

- What is the tone?
- Who is the intended audience?
- What is the purpose of the publication?
- What assumptions does the author make?
- What are the bases of the author's conclusions?
- Does the author agree or disagree with other authors of the subject?
- Does the content agree with what you know or have learned about the issue?

To help determine this, it might also help to look over the source's documentation and read some reviews of the source.

- Documentation (i.e., footnotes and bibliography)
 - Provides additional resources
 - Substantiates the author's research
- Reviews of various sources can be found in both electronic and print periodical indexes