

Writing Center Handouts

RADAR Credibility Test

RADAR is a framework that can help you remember what kinds of questions you should be asking about an information source as you evaluate it for quality and usefulness in your research.

<p>Rationale</p>	<p>Rationale matters as literature aims to achieve certain goals, but it isn't very objective due to authors' perspectives. They may seek to inform, persuade, or entertain. While some sources may be unreliable or driven by commercial motives, others are less overt about their biases. Different perspectives are valid if grounded in sound reasoning and evidence.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why did the author or publisher make this information available? 2. Is there obvious and/or extreme bias or prejudice? 3. Are alternative points of view presented? 4. Does the author omit any important facts or data that might disprove their claim? 5. If there is emotion, what is the purpose? 6. What tone is being used?
<p>Authority</p>	<p>Authority is important in judging the credibility of the author's assertions. In a trial regarding DNA evidence, a jury would find a genetics specialist's testimony far more authoritative compared to a testimony from a professor in English.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the author's credentials and affiliation with the topic? 2. Is the author associated with an educational institution or reputable organization? 3. Can information about the author be found in reference books or online? 4. Are the author's works cited by other sources on the same topic? 5. Is the publisher of the source reputable?
<p>Date</p>	<p>Date, or currency, matters as information can rapidly become outdated, weakening your argument if not updated. While not all assignments demand the latest data, older sources can offer historical context. The significance of the source's date varies across disciplines.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When was the information last updated? 2. Have newer articles been published on? 3. Are references to other sources up-to-date? 4. Is your topic in an area that changes rapidly, like technology or science? 5. Is the information obsolete?
<p>Accuracy</p>	<p>Accuracy is important because errors and untruths distort a line of reasoning. When you present inaccurate information, you undermine your own credibility.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are there known false statements? 2. Was the information reviewed by experts before publication, and is it from a reliable source? 3. Do citations support claims and are they correctly cited? 4. What's the consensus among experts, and is the research method appropriate?
<p>Relevance</p>	<p>Relevance is important because you are expected to support your ideas with pertinent information. A source detailing Einstein's marriage would not be very relevant to a paper about his scientific theories.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Does the information answer your question? 2. Does the information meet the requirements for the assignment? 3. Who is the intended audience? 4. Does the source add something new to your knowledge of the topic? 5. Is the information focused on the geographical location you are interested in?