



What is a scholarly source?

Two reasons that you should be a critical evaluator of information found online:

1. Anyone can publish a website.
2. Google and other search engines typically do not provide scholarly sources that are easily located. (In other words, you have to know how to find **good** information.)

Know GOOD information vs. BAD information.

- Not everything published online has gone through an editor or publisher.
- The top links in Google do not always provide accurate information.

According to a *New York Times* article, only one in five Science websites display accurate, scholarly information (Hilts 2011).

Apply the 5 W's when using the free web...

✓ **Who**

Author is named. Credentials given.

Sometimes this is easy, sometimes not. A quality source typically presents the author's name/organization's name for the reader.

✓ **What**

Purpose.

The webpage article is research based and not an editorial. Presents researched facts, not opinions!

✓ **When, Where**

Publication source.

When was it created/updated? Where did the information come from?

✓ **Why**

Objective. Does not contain biased information.

Why should I use this? Is the author trying to persuade me to do or buy something? Is this page a good source, or should I consider looking at a better one?

Google tips

- Use keywords. As few words as possible!
- Be as specific as possible.
- Refine your search and try again if you don't find good results. You may need to broaden or narrow your search.
- Don't be tempted to just look at the top links on Google. What you're looking for might be on page 2.... or page 22 of the results!

Plagiarism

Give credit whenever you use

- another person's idea, opinion, or theory.
- any facts, statistics, graphs, drawings-any pieces of information-that are not common knowledge.
- quotations of another person's actual spoken or written words.
- paraphrases of another person's spoken or written words.

Cite sources!

To give credit to the source, we use what's called a citation. Here's an example of how to cite a source:

Use "According to..."

- According to the Center for Disease Control, 15,990 people in the United States died in 2010 due to alcoholic liver diseases.

OR use a parenthetical citation

- A reported 15, 990 people in the United States died in 2010 due to alcoholic liver diseases (Center for Disease Control).

***Note: Parenthetical citations can be tricky! Above the organization is listed; however, if an author is listed, the author's last name is in parenthesis instead. If you're unsure on how to cite, try using "according to" or consult online resources for help.

If something is considered common knowledge, you don't have to cite it. Here's an example:

- Many people experience health problems each year in the United States due to alcohol abuse.

Citing sources makes writing much stronger!

See for yourself: Which statement is more convincing?

1. Young children need to read books in order to learn new things.

OR

2. According to the National Education Association, children learn an average of 4,000 to 12,000 new words each year as a result of reading books.

Topics to explore and cite

Choose one of the topics below. Find a good website to use if you were researching this topic. Practice citing sources by writing a statement that you might use in a research paper. Remember: always cite something that isn't common knowledge!

- Cell phone use in school
- Neil Armstrong/the first moon landing
- The history of the University of Kentucky
- The dangers of tobacco use