

## For Periodical Articles and Books

### Date of the Article or Book

1. In **what year** was it written? Is this **current enough** to be of use for your topic?
2. What is the date of the **most current item** listed in the bibliography?

### The Author; His/Her Background and Point of View

1. What are the **author's credentials**? Are they enough to make you **trust** what they write on this topic?
2. Does the information you discover about the author, the institution, or the journal, make you wonder whether there could be a **bias**, either hidden or explicit?
3. How many **other articles or books** has the author written? (Hint: search by author in *Academic Search Premier* or *ALICE*).
4. Does the author simply wish to **inform** or is this an **opinion piece** aimed at persuading the reader in some way?
5. Is the **source of funding** for the author's research indicated? If so, how might the research have been affected? (For example, drug research funded by a pharmaceutical company may well be slanted to favor that company's products. Or, an opinion piece written by a well-known Republican may view Democratic policies negatively—and *vice versa*.)

### The Book or Article Itself

1. How many items are in the **bibliography or list of references**? Is it long enough and current enough for you to believe the author did the necessary background work?
2. **For articles:** Using the information in *Academic Search Premier*, what is the **description of the journal**? (Hint: while viewing a complete record for an article in ASP, click on the title of the publication in the Source field to learn a little bit about the periodical itself.)
3. **For books:** Look for book reviews. For fairly recent (last 10-15 years or so) books, *Academic Search Premier* is a good place to look. For other sources of book reviews, Ask a Librarian!

## For Web Pages

In addition to the criteria outlined in the Date and Author sections above, web pages/websites have some special considerations:

1. **When** was the page last updated? (Hint: Look for this information in tops or bottoms of pages.) Is it **current enough** to be of use for your topic?
2. Are there **links** to other related pages on the topic?
3. What is the site's **domain**? Although the system is far from perfect, the following table gives an several kinds of sites, as defined by their domains (last part of the URL):

.gov	government agencies
.edu	educational institutions
.org	organizations, usually non-profit
.com	commercial businesses, including companies (such as Geocities) that host personal websites
.mil	the military
.net	organizations related to the Internet itself, such as a local Internet Service Provider, www.frogn.net.
.uk	Sample domain for a country, in this case the United Kingdom

While the type of domain is not a guarantee of reliable information, generally speaking site from .gov or .edu or .org domains are more reliable than those from .coms.