

Evaluate a Source with the 5Ws

WHO?

- Who is the author, what are their credentials for the topic?
- Is the author an expert on the topic? What is the author's affiliation?
- If an organization authored the document, are they an academic institution or a business?

WHERE?

- Where is the source published?
- Is it a reputable publisher?
- Is it self-published?
- Is it a website or an academic publisher?
- Is it a blog or a national news website?

WHAT?

- What is it about?
- Is it accurate?
- What type of source is it?
- Is it a popular or academic source?
- Is it a primary or secondary source?

WHY?

- Why was the source published?
- Is it to inform you, entertain you, persuade you?
- Is it to report original research?
- Does it represent an agenda?

WHEN?

- When was it published?
- If it's older, is that appropriate for your research? Is a historical perspective important in your research?
- Or is your research dependent on the most current data and information?