# Exploring Expertise (Assignment)

**Outcomes**

* Evaluate the level of expertise needed in order to consider a source as credible for a particular information need
* Discover what classifies as "expertise" in the subject area of a particular information need
* Explore a source of information in order to determine the validity and credibility of their claims on a particular topic

**Goal**

Your fifty year-old mother has been prescribed a heavy duty painkiller for a back injury she suffered a few weeks ago. You've heard a lot of stories on the news about the abuse of prescription medicine. Your goal is to find out if she should continue to use this medication and, if so, how long before you should start being concerned that she may be addicted to it.

**Role**

You are a concerned son/ daughter and you love your mother very much.

**Audience**

Your mother is headstrong and very smart. She loves you very much, but considers you her child still and won't just take your advice. She will need convincing before she believes you are an authority on a certain topic.

**Situation**

You have done a bit of research and found some articles that are helpful. The problem is that you don't know if you should trust the people the articles are quoting simply because they *sound smart.*

The following is a list of quotes and their speakers taken from recent news items about addiction to pain medication.

1. “It has become increasingly clear that opioids carry substantial risk but only uncertain benefits — especially compared with other treatments for chronic pain.” Dr. Thomas R. Frieden quoted in *New York Times*, March 15, 2015.
2. "Physical dependence (also called tolerance) is the body's response to long-term use. People who are physically dependent on a drug may need higher doses to get the same effects and may experience withdrawal symptoms when cutting back or abruptly stopping the drug." Mayo Clinic Staff posted on September 19, 2015.
3. “Physiological dependence is the normal response to regular dosages of many medications, whether opioids or others. It also happens with beta blockers for high blood pressure." Dr. Wilson Compton quoted in *Five Thirty Eight*, July 19, 2016.

**Performance**

You will need to research *the sources*. It isn't enough that they *sound smart* and what they say makes sense to you. You will need to learn whether or not the sources and who they quote are *credible.* This means you will have to research *them.*

**Standards for Success**

You will provide a short biography, history, or resume for the persons cited above that answers the question: *Is this a credible source to speak on this topic?*

Things you should consider:

* What is their current position or title? Where do they currently work?
* What professional and/or academic history do they have relevant to this topic?
* If there is controversy surrounding this topic, does the source have a strong investment in either one side of the debate? (For example, do they make a financial gain from their side?)
* Has this person published work on the topic in peer-reviewed or professional and/or scholarly publications?

You need to convince your mother that you know what you're talking about, in part, by convincing her that your opinions come from experts. Your decision for each speaker should be explained in a 100-150 word paragraph - a total of 300-450 words.