

4 - STEP  
STRATEGY  
FOR

# Evaluating Online Sources

Use reliable sources to make informed judgments and decisions.

## 01 Check and Identify

GET THE FIRST IMPRESSION



**URL:** Is the source recognizable or reputable? What is the domain name of the website (.gov, .edu, .org, .com, etc.)?

**Date:** When is the article written or updated? What time period is covered by the content?

**Author:** Is there an author? Is it a person or an organization?

**About Page:** Does the website have an About Us page that describes who they are?

**Links/Citations to Sources:** Are there links or citations to other sources? Does it link to an internal or an external source?

**Layout:** Does it provide easy navigation? Does it contain too many distractions?

## 02 Investigate and Discover

GATHER MORE EVIDENCE WITH **CRAAP** TEST



**Currency:** Is the article out-of-date for my topic? Can I find more current information?

**Relevance:** Does the content relate to my topic or answer my question? Is the source appropriate for research purposes?

**Authority:** Does the author(s) have education or experience that makes them an expert on this topic?

**Accuracy:** Is the information accurate? Where does it come from? Can I verify it with a source? Is the article under **peer-review** or **editorial review**?

**Purpose:** What is the purpose of the website? What potential biases does it have?

## 03 Read and Think

USE **LATERAL READING** AND **CRITICAL THINKING** SKILLS



**Consult diverse sources:** Have I looked at a variety of sources? Have I compared different perspectives?

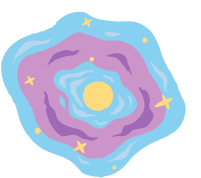
**Personal stories vs. broader research:** Is the source based on anecdotes or research? Is the research method valid and reliable? Who funds the research and what are their views and interest?

**Logical reasoning vs. fallacies:** Are the arguments convincing? Does the evidence support the conclusion? Does it contain overgeneralizations?

**Track evidence:** Have I followed upstream and downstream sources (backward and forward citations) to gather all evidence? Can I reconcile the differences and form my own opinions?

## 04 Reflect and Practice

APPLY **METACOGNITIVE SKILLS** AND **REFLECTIVE PRACTICE**



**Pierce the filter bubbles:** Am I surrounded by sources with the same views? Have I searched the other side of the story with opposite or neutral search terms?

**Examine our own biases:** Have I brought my own biases into source evaluation? Have I weighed the reasons from both sides? Do I favor this source because it affirms my belief?

**Climb down the ladder of inference:** Have I added personal or cultural meaning to understand the content? Are my assumptions or prior knowledge questionable? Have I come to the conclusion too quickly?

**Practice what we learn:** Have I applied the source evaluation strategies in real life? Am I aware of my own biases and cognitive limitations? Have I kept an open mind when forming my beliefs? Have I realized that a simple fact can be disruptive and suspended my judgment until I see the big picture?

