

Evaluating Information

Why Evaluate?

It is important to evaluate the information you are considering for your research. Your professor will know if you are using biased or inaccurate information in your assignments. Incorporating poor quality sources and information will influence the grade you receive on your assignments.

What is RADAR?

RADAR is a framework that will help you to evaluate the information you find.

<p>Relevance: the importance of the information for your needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the information relate to your topic? • Who is the intended audience?
<p>Authority: the source of your information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is the creator or author? • What are their credentials? • Does the URL reveal anything about the author or source?
<p>Date: the timeliness of the information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When was the information published? • When was the information updated? • Does your topic require recent information?
<p>Accuracy: the reliability, truthfulness, and correctness of the content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported by evidence • Provides logical analysis • Cites quality research and studies
<p>Purpose: the reason the information exists</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the purpose of the information? • Is the information fact, opinion, propaganda? • Is the language or tone unbiased and free from emotion?

What is the difference between primary, secondary, and tertiary sources?

<u>Primary</u>	<u>Secondary</u>	<u>Tertiary</u>
<p>Primary sources are first-hand accounts or individual representations. They are created by those who have directly witnessed what they are describing.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research data and surveys • Letters or diaries • Original photographs • Speeches or autobiographies • Newspaper reports • Original research in math and science (journal articles and conference proceedings) 	<p>Secondary sources interpret and/or analyze primary sources, as they offer different perspectives, analyses and conclusions on a given topic.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essays or reviews • Articles that analyze or discuss ideas and events • Criticisms or commentaries 	<p>Tertiary sources are a compilation or digest of primary and secondary materials. Generally, they are agreed upon fact.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dictionaries • Encyclopedias • Guidebooks • Almanacs

When should I use journal articles for my assignment?


Journal articles should be used for your assignments and research, as they are written by expert researchers and critiqued by specialists in the field.

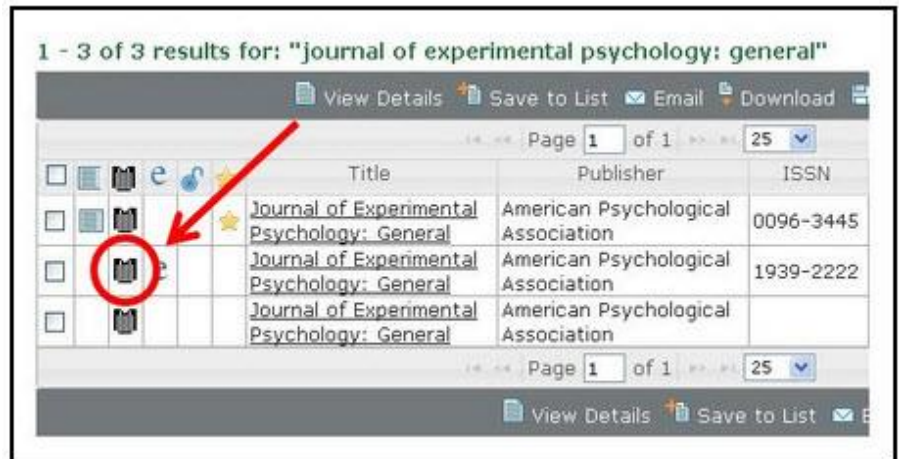
It is important to note the difference between a peer reviewed article and a popular article. Peer reviewed articles refer to those that have been edited and reviewed by authors' peers, who are experts in the same field.

Popular articles are not peer reviewed, and are written to inform the general public.

How do I know if an article is peer-reviewed?

From the library's list of research databases select Ulrichs Web Global Serials Directory. This allows users to discover information about the journal, such as whether or not it is peer-reviewed.

In Ulrichs, use the search bar to search the name of the journal that your article is indexed in. Journals that are peer-reviewed are referred to as "refereed." 



How can I learn more?

Visit the UW library's online research guide: Evaluating Information Sources: subjectguides.uwaterloo.ca/infosources