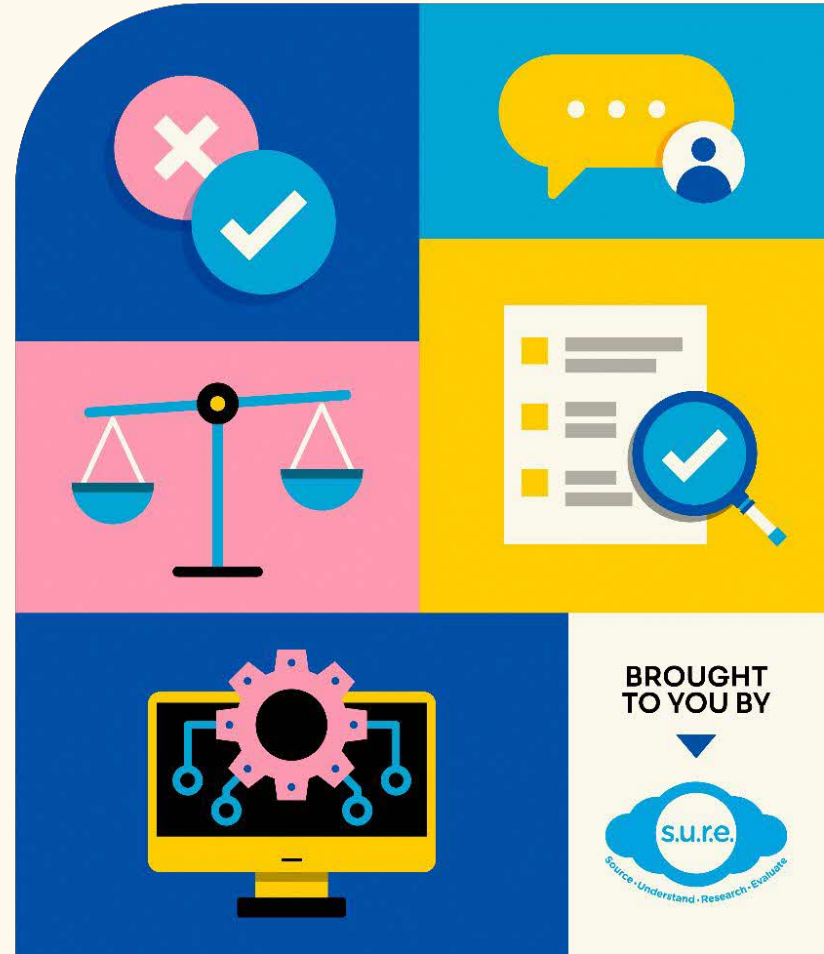# Evaluate

In this topic, you will:

➔ Evaluate new information or ideas against prior knowledge

➔ Identify the criteria you need to make informed decisions

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Evaluating a source

Using the CRAAP framework

Determining the author's intentions

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To determine if the information you receive can be used for research purposes will require evaluation.

Before we can evaluate a source, it is important for us to consider some of the criteria that we can use to judge its usefulness and reliability.

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What are some of the questions that come to your mind when you are looking for information in a source?

Why was this source written?

Is the information in this source accurate?

Is the information up-to-date?

Who wrote this source and what is their background?

Is the information relevant to my research question?

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Image: Freepik

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Definition

One framework we can use to help us evaluate a source is the CRAAP test.

The CRAAP test uses the following criteria to determine the usefulness and reliability of a source:

Currency: Is the information up to date, and current for your topic?

Relevance: Does the information answer your question? Is it relevant to your needs?

Authority: Who is the creator of the information? Are they an authority on the topic?

Accuracy: Is the information supported by evidence? Can you verify its accuracy?

Purpose: What is the purpose of the information? Does it contain any potential biases?

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Case study:

WOMEN'S HISTORY IN SINGAPORE

Image: Wikimedia Commons

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→ Let's say you're doing research on the history of Singaporean women in the workplace during the 20th century and you stumble upon this article from Biblioasia.

→ Is this source reliable and useful for your research topic? We can find out using the CRAAP test.

Image: Wikimedia Commons

✓ **C**urrency

While the article was published in 2023, the information it provides is still considered to be up-to-date as it draws from primary sources that were produced during the 20th century.

✓ **R**elevance

This article is directly relevant to our research topic as it looks at women who were given more opportunities to enter the workforce with the advent of the typewriter.

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Image: Ministry of Information and the Arts Collection, courtesy of National Archives of Singapore

✓ **A**uthority

The information was published on BiblioAsia, which is a publication produced by the National Library Board on the history, culture and heritage of Singapore. Furthermore, the article was written by Dr Liew Kai Khiun, an academic who has been researching Singapore's history for the past two decades. Thus, it can be regarded as trustworthy.

✓ **A**ccuracy

The article is well-supported by a list of reference sources, which allows readers to track where the information given is derived from.

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Image: Yusof Ishak Collection, courtesy of National Archives of Singapore

✓ **Purpose**

The purpose of the article is to educate the public about the role the typewriter played in enabling Singaporean women to enter the workforce and access educational opportunities.

The information provided is thus written in a factual, informative and objective manner.

———————————————

Based on the above criteria, the article can be considered useful and reliable.

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Let's give this a try!

Conduct research on a topic you're interested in using methods learnt previously.

Once you find information you like, use the CRAAP test as a benchmark for evaluation.
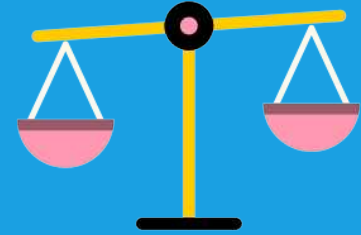
Currency

Relevance
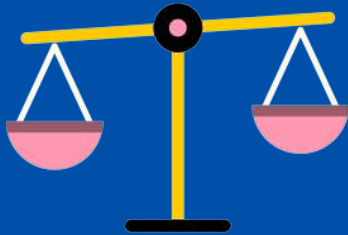
Authority

Accuracy

Purpose

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Depending on what the author's intentions are, the information they produce can be considered to be biased and unreliable.

This could come across in the **editorial choices** that they make, especially if they are hoping to convince audiences to react in a certain way.

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One way to determine if a source is biased is to identify the author's intentions.

Authors can produce content for a variety of reasons. Let's take a look at some of the discussion surrounding climate climate, for example.

Journalists write articles **to inform** the public about the effects of climate change.

Climate scientists write opinion pieces **to persuade** governments to take action.

Filmmakers produce movies with climate change-related themes **to entertain** audiences.

Images: Unsplash (1, 2, 3)

How then do we determine if a source is reliable or not based on the author's intentions?

Sources that are written to inform are seen as more reliable as they are generally grounded in facts and evidence.

Sources that are written to persuade might be less reliable as they usually present only a one-sided view of an issue.

Sources that are used to entertain are considered unreliable as they are usually fictional accounts.

Remember to check the author's qualifications!
If the author is an expert in the field, what he or she says is usually more reliable than information from a layperson.

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There are two questions we can ask ourselves to determine an author's intentions in producing a particular piece of information:

➔ Does the author use overly positive or negative words, or subjective language that cannot be measured?

➔ Is the viewpoint presented in the source a balanced one?

Let's give this a try!

Image: Wikimedia Commons

Read this article about Elon Musk's acquisition of the social media company Twitter.

What is the author's intention in writing this piece?

What criteria did you use to determine the purpose?

Is this source biased?

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