Information Literacy

Open Educational Resources @ UNC

2018
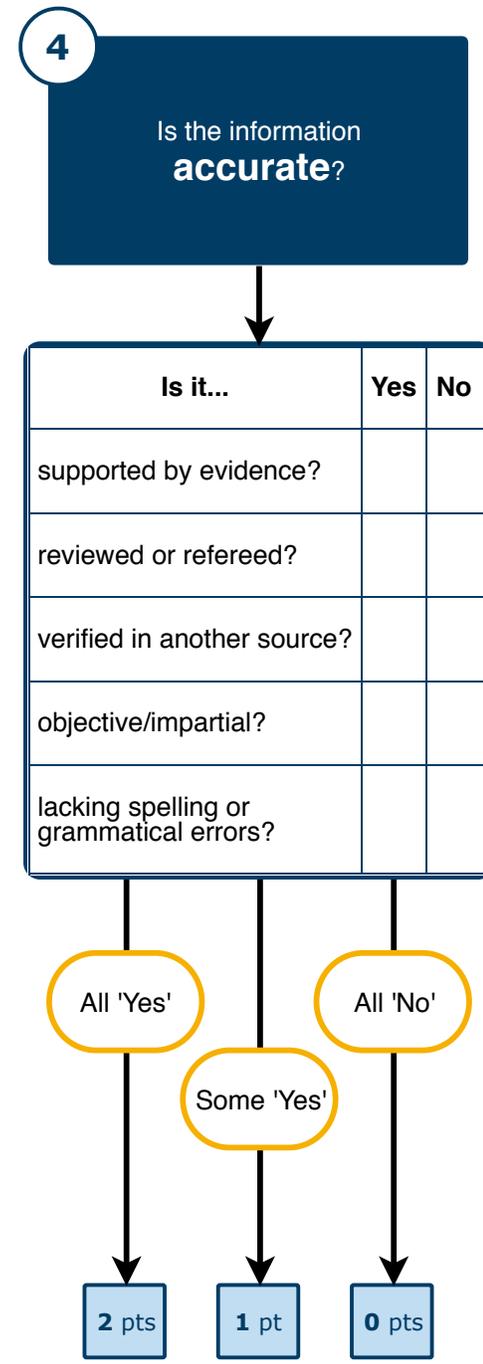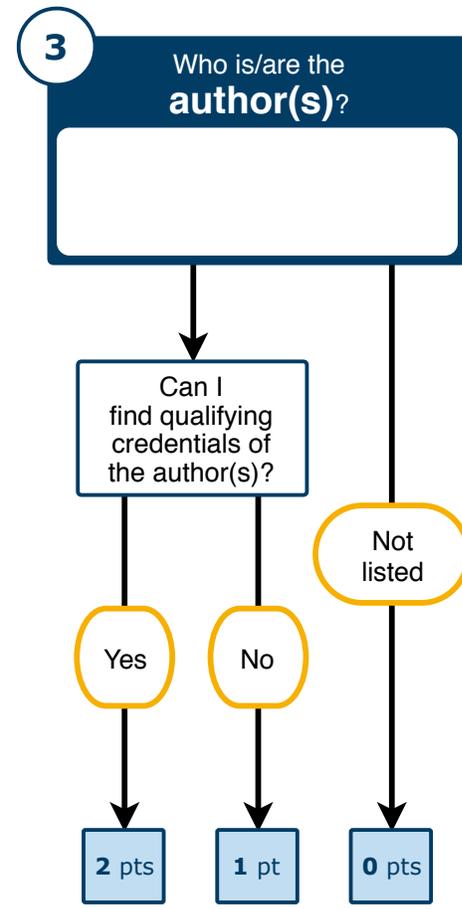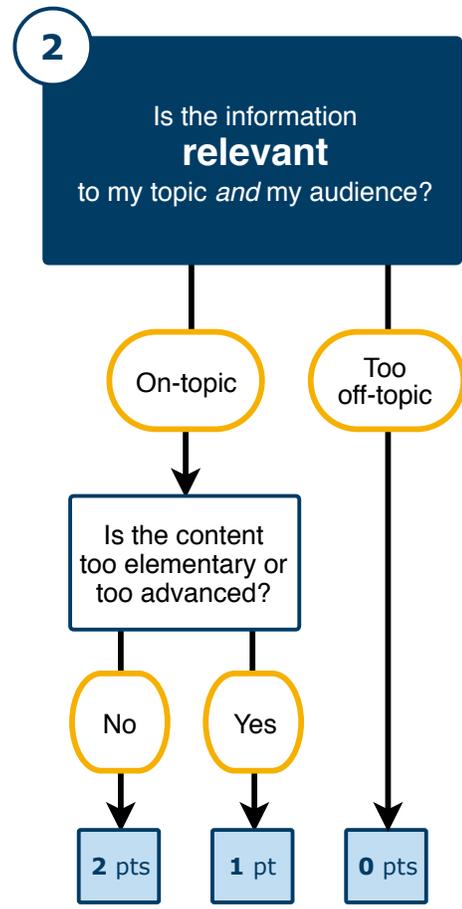
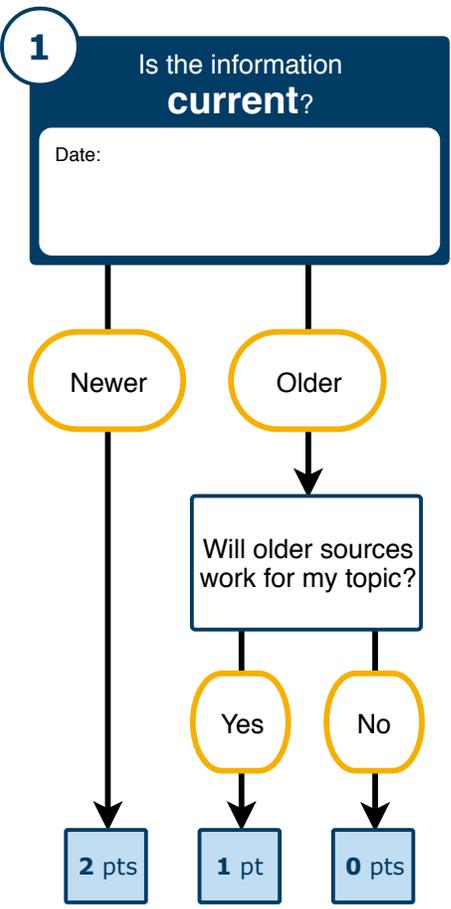# Activity: Source Evaluation Scorecard

Nicole R. Webber
University of Northern Colorado, nicole.r.webber@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: https://digscholarship.unco.edu/infolit

Recommended Citation

Webber, Nicole R., "Activity: Source Evaluation Scorecard" (2018). *Information Literacy*. 19.
https://digscholarship.unco.edu/infolit/19

1 Is the information **current**?

Date: _____

Newer → **2 pts**

Older → Will older sources work for my topic?
- Yes → **1 pt**
- No → **0 pts**

2 Is the information **relevant** to my topic *and* my audience?

On-topic → Is the content too elementary or too advanced?
- No → **2 pts**
- Yes → **1 pt**

Too off-topic → **0 pts**

3 Who is/are the **author(s)**?

Can I find qualifying credentials of the author(s)?
- Yes → **2 pts**
- No → **1 pt**

Not listed → **0 pts**

4 Is the information **accurate**?

Is it...	Yes	No
supported by evidence?		
reviewed or refereed?		
verified in another source?		
objective/impartial?		
lacking spelling or grammatical errors?		

All 'Yes' → **2 pts**

Some 'Yes' → **1 pt**

All 'No' → **0 pts**

5 What is the **purpose** of this information?

To inform → **2 pts**

To persuade → **1 pt**

To sell/entertain → **0 pts**

Source Evaluation Scorecard

Be sure to consider all of the factors that go into each criterion by referring to the questions on the back of this handout. Assign an appropriate point value for each step with the guidance of this scorecard. Add up the total score to gauge the credibility of your source.

Source Score: _____

<5 — **Stop** - This source is likely losing credibility in several key areas. See if you can find a stronger source that still covers the characteristics that drew you to this source in the first place.

5-7 — **Caution** - Identify the lower-scoring criteria of your source and determine whether you can provide justification for using it despite these shortcomings. If not, find another source.

8-10 — **Proceed** - This is likely a strong source. Make sure to continue your research in order to select only the best of your strong sources, rather than just using the first ones you find.
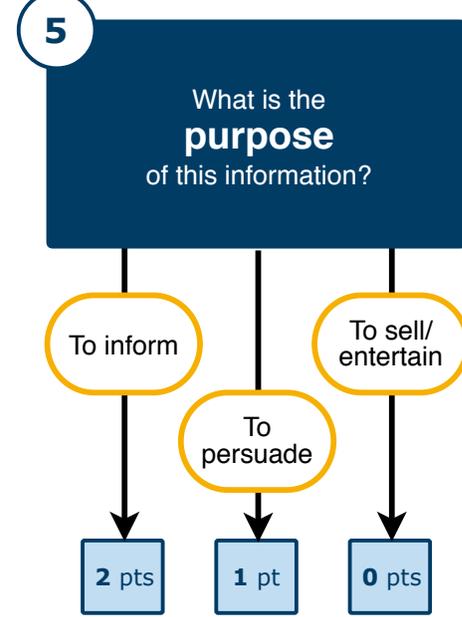
The CRAAP Test

There are many tools and mnemonic devices to help you remember the criteria for evaluating sources, but many will cover the same general aspects. The CRAAP Test is just one memorable acronym for evaluating sources. Use the one that works best for you.

As you go through each of the categories below, remember to think holistically. Few sources will be perfect in every area, and the overall strength of a source will depend on the type of source that it is, your specific needs, and how you plan to use the source.

Currency: The timeliness of the information

- When was the information published or posted?
- How likely is it that there have been advances in the topic since the source was published? Has the information been revised or updated?
- Does your topic require information published within the last couple years, or will older sources work as well? (Remember: Consider what is typical of your discipline or area of study.)
- For websites or other electronic sources: Are the links functional and stable for future access?
- Do you need seminal works, historical accounts, or other older source types?

Relevance: The importance of the information for your needs

- Does the information relate to your topic or answer your question? (Remember: Don't limit yourself to looking for or utilizing information that supports your hypothesis or point of view.)
- Who is the intended audience? Is the source scholarly, popular, or trade?
- Is the information at an appropriate level (i.e. not too elementary or advanced for your needs)?
- Have you looked at a variety of sources before determining that this is one you will use?
- Would you be comfortable citing this source in your research paper?

Authority: The source of the information

- Who is the author/publisher/source/sponsor? (This may be individual(s) or a group/organization.)
- What are the author's credentials or organizational affiliations?
- Is the author an expert on the topic or otherwise qualified to write on the topic? (Is their authority societal, expert, or experiential?)
- Is there contact information, such as a publisher name, email address, or physical address?
- For web resources: does the URL reveal anything about the author or source? (Examples: .com .edu .gov .org .net)

Accuracy: The reliability, truthfulness and correctness of the content

- Where does the information come from?
- Is the information supported by evidence? What type of evidence?
- What sources or experts are cited in the work? Are you able to find and verify these?
- Has the information been reviewed or refereed?
- Is the information verified in other sources or from personal knowledge?
- Does the language or tone seem unbiased and free of emotion?
- Are there spelling, grammar or typographical errors? Is it clearly written and organized?

Purpose: The reason the information exists

- What is the purpose of the information? (Some may include to inform, teach, sell, entertain, provoke, or persuade. There is not necessarily any wrong purpose, but it should align properly with *your* purpose.)
- Do the authors/sponsors make their intentions or purpose clear?
- Is the information fact, opinion or propaganda?
- Does the point of view appear objective and impartial?
- Are there political, ideological, cultural, religious, institutional, or personal biases?