

Currency. Relevance. Authority. Accuracy. Purpose.

The following resource has been adapted from Meriam Library, California State University–Chico, to meet the needs of lab report writers. Evaluate your peer-reviewed articles based on the five major criteria: currency, relevance, authority, accuracy, and purpose. Use the list of questions as a guideline to evaluate your sources.

Currency

How up-to-date is the information?

- Is the information itself current?
- Is up-to-date information important for your topic?
- Does the source have a date of publication?
- When was the information published?
- How current are the author's references?

Relevance

How important is the information for your research and audience?

- In terms of content, how does this source compare to other sources?
- Does the information relate to your topic?
- Does the information relate to your experimental problem or hypothesis?
- For whom is this information written? Who is the author's audience?
- Does the author present original research or review previous research?
- Does the information have the appropriate depth for your purpose?

Authority

How credible are the sources of this information?

- Who is the author?
- What are the author's credentials?
- How often has the author published on this subject?
- Where is the article published?
- What are the credentials of the publication?
- Can you determine the credentials of the article's reviewers?

Accuracy

How reliable is the content?

- Is the article well organized and clear?
- Is there sufficient background information to understand the goals?
- Are the methods stated clearly and precisely?
- Are the statistical methods used appropriate?
- What evidence is provided?
- Are the visuals clear? Do they look professional?
- Do the results make sense?
- Have the findings been checked by other researchers?
- Does the author adequately interpret the results?
- Does the author sufficiently describe the limitations of the study?
- Are adequate references cited?
- Is the author's bibliography comprehensive or basic?

Purpose

What is the author's goal?

- Does the author have potential biases?
- Is the material presented objectively?
- What is the research question and why is it important?
- What is the author's hypothesis?