

Research Tips for You!

INTERNET:

In most cases, you should stay away from Internet information that doesn't provide the name of an author. While the information contained in the article may be true, it is more difficult to validate information if you don't know the credentials of the author.

Observe the URL

If the information is linked to an organization, try to determine the reliability of the sponsoring organization. One tip is the url ending. If the site name ends with **.edu**, it is most likely an educational institution. Even so, you should be aware of political bias.

If a site ends in **.gov**, it is most likely a reliable government web site. Government sites are usually good sources for statistics and objective reports.

Sites that end in **.org** are usually non-profit organizations. They can be very good sources or very poor sources, so you'll have to take care to research their possible agendas or political biases, if they exist.

For instance, collegeboard.org is the organization that provides the SAT and other tests. You can find valuable information, statistics, and advice on that site. PBS.org is a non-profit organization that provides educational public broadcasts. It provides a wealth of quality articles on its site.

Other sites with the .org ending are advocacy groups that are highly political in nature. While it is entirely possible to find reliable information from a site like this, as always, you should be mindful of the political slant and acknowledge this in your work.

Online Journals and Magazines

A reputable journal or magazine should contain a bibliography for every article. The list of sources within that bibliography should be pretty extensive, and it should include scholarly, non-Internet sources.

Check for statistics and data within the article to back up the claims made by the author. Does the writer provide evidence to back up his statements?

News Sources

Every television and print news source has a web site. To some extent, you can rely on the most trusted news sources, but you should not rely on them exclusively. After all, network and cable news stations are involved in entertainment. Think of them as a stepping stone to more reliable sources.

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DON'T FORGET:

Evidence is concrete data that supports a hypothesis:

Example:

Hypothesis: Almost everyone loves cold pizza

★ **Evidence: In a survey of 1,000 people, 90% of the people said they loved cold pizza.**

~~NOT EVIDENCE: cold pizza is good~~

Rebuttals are arguments against a *specific* piece evidence:

Example (a rebuttal against the evidence above):

Rebuttal: That survey was only taken from people in Alabama, not taking into consideration other states, thus making the survey not valid. (attacks the specific evidence)

~~NOT A REBUTTAL: Everybody likes spaghetti better than cold pizza~~