

EVALUATING INTERNET SOURCES

Not everything you see online is true. That's why it's so important to screen websites before you use them to help with homework or for information in a school report.

Use this checklist ☒ to figure out if the online source you're using is reliable.

Evaluate the WEBSITE

- ☐ **What is the domain?** Look at the Web address for clues about what kind of website you're using.

✓ Reliable

.edu: a school, college, or university
.gov: a government agency

? Check carefully

.com: a commercial business
.net: a network
.org: an advocacy group

- ☐ **Is it easy to navigate?** A reliable website will make it easy to find what you need.
- ☐ **Are there a lot of errors?** Spelling and grammar mistakes probably mean it's not trustworthy.

Evaluate the AUTHOR

- ☐ **Is there an author listed?** The author should be easy to identify and contact.
- ☐ **Is he/she an expert?** The author should be qualified to write on this subject.
- ☐ **What else has he/she published?** An author is more reliable if he or she has published other works.

Evaluate the INFORMATION

- ☐ **Is it current and accurate?** The information should be up to date and include references.
- ☐ **Can you find it on other sites?** Make sure the information appears in other reliable sources, including websites, books, and articles.
- ☐ **Is it fact or opinion?** Be sure to note when you're using someone's opinion and when you're using proven facts.

Hint

Trust your gut! If something doesn't seem right, it probably isn't.

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