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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