

PARCA Test

Evaluating information sources is critical to the process of academic research. The following are important considerations when looking at potential resources to see in what way they might be useful (or not) for your research.

Purpose:

Why does this resource exist?

- What is the purpose? Is it to teach, sell, promote, entertain?
- Do the author(s) make their intentions clear? Are there political, ideological, cultural, religious, or personal biases?
- Is the information provided by the resource fact, opinion?
- Does it have a variety of viewpoints and arguments? Do your sources reflect different genders, ages, ethnic groups, languages, nationalities, disciplines, etc.?

Authority:

Who wrote/produced/published the resource?

- Is the source published by an academic publisher or a reputable organization?
- Is an author clearly identified? What are the author's credentials or organizational affiliations?
- Is the author qualified to write on the topic? Degrees, professional designations, professional accomplishments and experience are indicators of qualifications.
- If it is a website, does the url reveal anything about the source (.com, .gov, .edu, .org)?

Relevance:

Does the resource meet your needs?

- Is the information related to your topic?
- Does it support your viewpoint or provide an alternate one?
- Is the information and discussion at an appropriate level? Who is the intended audience (general population, scholars, practitioners etc.)?

Currency:

How current is the resource?

- When was the resource published or posted?
- Is this the most current version of this information available?
- Has the information been revised / updated? Is there proof of last update, publication date?
- Is currency of information a concern for your topic?

Accuracy:

Is the information in the resource reliable?

- Are the author's claims supported by evidence?
- Has the content been reviewed by other experts? Is it a peer-reviewed resource?
- Are the language and tone biased?
- Are there spelling or grammatical errors?