

# Formats and Evaluating Your Sources

Hello everybody and welcome to our video on different resource formats and how to evaluate them. There are many different formats for the resources that we all use: we have books and articles and movies, and we have data and maps and music and government information. It's all available to us, and sometimes we have to find specific types, like what you have to do for this class.

One way to think about research is to think that when you are learning about a topic, when you are looking for information, and when you are producing a research output, such as an essay or a presentation, or a report, you're actually having a conversation about that topic. This happens when you consume and create information that exists in images, storytelling, books and articles, on the web, and on social media platforms. So, when we interact with information, we need to pay attention to a few things. For example, when we are looking at a website, we can scan the domain in the web address and form a quick understanding about that page. A .com is a very common registration, and it doesn't tell us a lot. However, a .ca means that page was registered in Canada. A .org is usually used by a non-profit organizations, and a .edu is used by education institutions. You can also have a .me for individuals, or a .biz or .ninja, which may not mean much without further investigation. But getting used to interrogating information sources is the first step towards a successful research strategy.

As we already talked about, there are many types of resources, and we will now concentrate on three formats typically used in university research. They are scholarly academic sources, popular resources, and grey literature sources. An academic, scholarly, and peer-reviewed source is usually written by scholars or researchers for academics. It also covers an in depth area of the topic. It's meant to advance a field of knowledge. And it always includes a bibliography and citations. A popular source is often written by journalists or staff writers. It's meant for general interest, sometimes for entertainment. It usually includes photos or ads, and usually it doesn't contain a bibliography. Grey sources or grey literature refers to government information or government documents: annual reports or working papers. It sometimes includes bibliographies, but not always.

Now that you know the difference between these three types of sources let's talk about how do you know when you actually have a good source - a source that will help you with your assignment? We now need to learn about how to evaluate these sources of information. For that let's use the word PARCA to remember what you need to evaluate sources. PARCA stands for Purpose, Authority, Relevance, Currency, and Accuracy.

Let's talk about Purpose. When you find a resource, ask yourself: why was it produced? Was it meant to educate, to inform, to entertain? Was it produced for an academic environment?

Next think about Authority. Think about the author. Is that author a scholar, an expert, a journalist? What do you know about the person who produced that resource?

When it comes to Relevance, ask yourself: Does this particular source match your topic? Does it match what your professor is asking? Does it fit the area or the geography or even the time frame that you're looking for?

When it comes to Currency, ask yourself: How recently was the article published? And how recently was the data presented in the article actually collected?

Accuracy is the last concept we're going to talk about here. Look at the resource and ask yourself: do you trust the data? Do you trust the references, or the claims presented in that source?

After watching this video, you know about different formats and how to evaluate these resources using the acronym PARCA. You can always go to the library website at [library.yorku.ca](http://library.yorku.ca) and click on "Ask a Question" so you can connect with a librarian. Thanks for watching and learning with us.