Evaluating Web Sites:
Easy as A B C D
Author

Can you find the author’s name? Is the author an expert?

TIP: The author may be a company or organization rather than a single person. The page may not have a by-line like you usually see for newspaper and magazine articles.

TIP: If the author’s name is not easy to find, look for an About page that may include the author’s mission, vision, contact information, funding sources, and more.
Does the site identify its sponsor? Who/what cause might benefit from the information? Is the site trying to convince you of a certain point (persuasive) or merely providing information, stating known facts (informational)?

Our purpose is educational. We prefer sites that:
• Offer fact rather than opinion.
• Present both sides of an issue.
What is the intended use of the content?

This site gives advice for middle school girls—not facts for college students.

What kind of content is included?

This site includes many references, so we:
1. Learn where the site's information is from.
2. We find additional sources we might use.

Who is the audience for this site?

This site:
• presents data
• explains why the data is here
• discusses the data.
Date

Is there a date? Is the date of the information important for your topic?

This frequently updated news site shows “2 hours ago” rather than a date. Make note of the current date for the citation. In a day or two, the date will be modified to reflect the actual date.

TIPS:
• It is not always possible to find a date on every Web page or site. Consider whether it is important for your topic. Is it date-sensitive?
• Not every topic, like historical topics, requires the most recent information.

For a current topic, be sure you can find a date and it is not outdated.
More Tips

For educational purposes, seek the following domains:

- .org Non-profit organizations
- .gov Government sites
- .edu Educational (college, university, etc.)
- .mil Military site

**NOTE:** Sites with a tilde ~ in the URL may be affiliated with an educational site but belong to an individual who may not be an expert.