

Using Sources

Guidelines for careful use of the web: WWICC

One

Establish who or what the source is.

This means identifying both the author and the publication.

Two

Establish what the intent of the source is: persuasive or informative. Persuasive sources need to be read with care for potential bias.

Three

Establish the credibility of the source

1. Is the source from a credible publication? (Is it on the list? If not, what is the reputation of the publication?)
2. What is the author's background/qualifications to write on this topic? (are they a reporter, a government official, an expert in the field etc.)
3. For persuasive pieces, what are the author's biases? (often articles will have a biography at the beginning or end, sources can also be Googled and their social media presence examined)

When you are uncertain about an author, their credentials or a site, err on the side of caution (if you are not sure about a source - don't use it!)

Four

Can the information provided by the source be corroborated by other quality sources?

Be careful here. Sometimes false information is simply copied across multiple sources. Make sure corroboration is from a quality source.