My Learning Essentials

Checking resources for reliability, objectivity and relevance.

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|  | Reliability | Objectivity | Relevance |
| What?  …type of source is it?  The format of the source may give some indication of its quality  …are the main arguments of the source? | Has the information been verified in any way? | Does the information in the  source cohere with other  sources you have read? | What is the content of the  information in the source?  Is this relevant to your  research? |
| Why?  …was it produced? | Does the purpose of the source influence its reliability? | Was the source created to  persuade, sell, entertain,  inform, or for another purpose?  Does the purpose of the source influence the objectivity of the information? | Was it produced in response  to a particular event, time or  situation?  Does this have an impact on  the relevance of the  information? |
| When?  …was it published or  last updated? | If it's a website, has it been updated  recently? | Is there any bias about the  piece relating to when it was  written or produced? | Is it recent?  Does this impact upon the  relevance?  What is the scope of your  research? |
| How?  …was it published? | Was it published in an academic  journal?  If it's a website, what is the URL? | If it's a newspaper article,  which paper was it published  in? | Is it UK-based or international?  Does the geographical context impact upon the relevance of the information? |
| Where?  …was it produced? | Does the purpose of the source influence its reliability? | Was the source created to  persuade, sell, entertain,  inform, or for another  purpose?  Does the purpose of the source influence the  objectivity of the information? | Was it produced in response  to a particular event, time or  situation?  Does this have an impact on the relevance of the  information? |
| Who?  …wrote or produced the  source?  …is the target audience  for the source? | What are the author's credentials?  Have they written anything else in this area?  Are they qualified to be writing on this topic? | Is the author objective, or do  they have an agenda or bias?  Is it an independent author,  or are they writing on behalf  of an organisation?  Is the author affiliated to any  organisations that may affect  their objectivity? | What audience was the source produced for?  Does this affect its relevance? |