

Six honest serving men

Checking reliability objectivity and relevance...

| | Reliability | Objectivity | Relevance |
|---|--|--|--|
| What? <i>...type of source is it? The format of the source may give some indication of its quality</i> <i>...are the main arguments of the source?</i> | <i>Has the information been verified in any way?</i> | <i>Does the information in the source cohere with other sources you have read?</i> | <i>What is the content of the information in the source? Is this relevant to your research?</i> |
| Why? <i>...was it produced?</i> | <i>Does the purpose of the source influence its reliability?</i> | <i>Was the source created to persuade, sell, entertain, inform, or for another purpose?</i> <i>Does the purpose of the source influence the objectivity of the information?</i> | <i>Was it produced in response to a particular event, time or situation?</i> <i>Does this have an impact on the relevance of the information?</i> |

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| When? <i>...was it published or last updated?</i> | <i>If it's a website, has it been updated recently?</i> | <i>Is there any bias about the piece relating to when it was written or produced?</i> | <i>Is it recent? Does this impact upon the relevance? What is the scope of your research?</i> |
| How? <i>...was it published?</i> | <i>Was it published in an academic journal? If it's a website, what is the URL?</i> | <i>If it's a newspaper article, which paper was it published in?</i> | <i>Is it UK-based or international? Does the geographical context impact upon the relevance of the information?</i> |

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| Who? <i>...wrote or produced the source?</i> <i>...is the target audience for the source?</i> | <i>What are the author's credentials? Have they written anything else in this area?</i> <i>Are they qualified to be writing on this topic?</i> | <i>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?</i> | <i>What audience was the source produced for?</i> <i>Does this affect its relevance?</i> |