

Panel One: *Chapter Six: Evaluating Your Sources*

Panel Two: *FL with a book floating over her head. She has both hands raised, palms facing up. Over one hand floats a tiny trash can, over the other hand floats something that indicates approval/utility/inspiration – a light bulb, a thumbs up, etc. Maybe even include a gauge in the background that indicates high vs. low quality and it would include everything in between, not just two points at either end of the scale.*

FL: Not all information is equal. [br] We've alluded to that a number of times, but we haven't really talked about how to determine if a source is worth using in your research. There are good sources, bad sources, and in-between sources. And the quality of those sources can shift depending on the context of your own needs. [br] So let's talk about how to effectively examine a source and judge the quality of its information.

Panel Three: *Split panel. In the first part, FL faces away from the Twitter icon, and toward a group of official government webpages, and government spokesperson in official suits or those emergency jackets with a government acronym on it (FEMA, ATF, etc.). In the second part, FL has switched perspectives and now faces the Twitter icon, surrounded by a bunch of people, talking to each other, gossiping and gabbing incessantly.*

FL: This process can be relative: depending on your research topic and the approach you're taking, a source can be either good or bad. [br] For example, if I'm studying the local, state, and federal authorities' responses to a natural disaster, the general public's Twitter responses won't necessarily provide the information I need. I could look at the relevant government websites, and maybe even *their* Twitter feeds for quality information, but I'd have to be specific. [br] If, however, I want to research how information (or misinformation) is spread via Twitter during that disaster, I would definitely want to include the tweets of the general public in my study. [br] In the first case, the information found in those civilian tweets may not be relevant or accurate, but a change in perspective suddenly made them relevant and useful. So as you can see, your point of view and research angle has a big impact on what kind of information you need.

Panel Four: *FL walking down a line of items, examining each one with a magnifying glass. We see an academic journal, popular magazine, books, webpage, person screaming on a street corner.*

FL: Examine each source you use, whether it's from an academic journal, popular magazine, book, website, or a person yelling on the street corner. Every piece of information needs to be evaluated; there are multiple factors contributing to a source's usefulness.

WHEN EVALUATING ANY INFORMATION IMMEDIATELY START ASKING QUESTIONS:



WE NEED TO KNOW WHO'S RESPONSIBLE FOR THE INFORMATION SO THAT WE CAN DETERMINE, TO SOME DEGREE, WHETHER OR NOT IT'S TRUSTWORTHY:

WHERE DID THE INFORMATION COME FROM?

WHO PRODUCED IT, SPONSORED IT, AND/OR PUBLISHED IT?

WHAT'S THE SOURCE OF THE INFORMATION?

WHO'S THE AUTHOR?

WHAT ORGANIZATION IS RESPONSIBLE FOR PUBLISHING IT (IN PRINT OR ONLINE)?

DO THE AUTHOR AND PUBLISHER HAVE THE **AUTHORITY** TO PRODUCE INFORMATION ON A GIVEN TOPIC?

NO SINGLE QUESTION WILL FULLY DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT INFORMATION IS WORTH USING, BUT THEY CAN **ALL** CONTRIBUTE TO THE EVALUATION PROCESS.

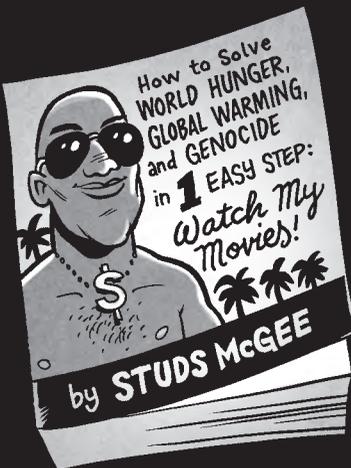


DOES THE AUTHOR HAVE THE **EDUCATION, CREDENTIALS, AND EXPERTISE** NEEDED TO CREATE ACCURATE AND RELIABLE INFORMATION? DOES THEIR EXPERIENCE ALIGN WITH THE SUBJECT? WHY ARE THEY QUALIFIED TO WRITE ON **THIS** TOPIC?

HMMM. SCIENCE IS FUN, BUT I THINK I'LL WRITE AN ARTICLE ABOUT **PIRATES!**

IF THERE'S INFORMATION OFFERED ABOUT THE AUTHOR WITHIN THE SOURCE ITSELF, SEE IF YOU CAN VERIFY IT, JUST TO MAKE SURE (YOU MIGHT START WITH A UNIVERSITY OR ORGANIZATION'S WEBSITE). TRY TO LOCATE OTHER WORKS BY THE AUTHOR.

DO THEY HAVE AN ESTABLISHED RECORD OF PUBLICATION ON THE TOPIC?



WHAT MAKES THE PUBLICATION OR WEBSITE RELIABLE, AS WELL?

DOES IT HAVE A HISTORY OF BEING A RELIABLE SOURCE OF INFORMATION?

IS IT PEER-REVIEWED AND/OR ACADEMIC RESOURCE, OR IS IT MORE OF A POPULAR ITEM?

THE TITLE OF THE RESOURCE MIGHT PROVIDE SOME CLUES, AS WOULD THE SPONSORS OR PUBLISHERS OF THE MATERIAL.

