

Getting Ready for Your Research Paper Step Three – Finding the Best Source Materials

Understand the difference between the quality and the quantity of research materials.

- *More* is not necessarily *better*.
- Discriminate between your sources.
- Pay attention to the usefulness of the resources you find.
- Also, draw from the experience of the experts in research (i.e.; librarians, professional writers, instructors).

Hierarchy of Source Materials - Listed most to least helpful

Scholarly Book (most helpful)
Biography
Scholarly Article
Sponsored website
Interview
Experiment/ Test/ Observation
Trade Book
Encyclopedia
Popular magazine
Newspaper
Listserv posting
Individual website
Usenet news group posting
Internet chat conversation (least helpful)

Evaluate resources by:

- Checking Author Credibility
- Assessing Date of Publication
- Looking for In-depth Coverage of Subject
- Finding the "Expert" for your Topic
- Recognizing Point of View
- Verifying one Opinion against Another
- Considering Authenticity

SEE ALSO Writing Center handout "Evaluating Internet Sources."

Lester, James D. and James D. Lester, Jr. Writing Research Papers; A Complete Guide. Tenth Edition. New York: Longman, 2002.



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