

## 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.*