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**Lesson two:  Sources of Information Used in the Literature Review**

**Task 1: Read the texts and answer the following question.**

**What are the criteria used to identify an authoritative source of information?**

**Text 1:**

For your project, you must as far as possible use authoritative sources. These will usually be *academic*, meaning that they are articles published in journals or books whose authors are usually affiliated to a university. When we say the author is an *authority*, this means that the work produced by this person has been critically reviewed by peers also knowledgeable about the field of study, and these have endorsed the work. The author may have published a number of pieces on the same general topic area, demonstrating a depth and breadth of knowledge about the field, and a development in his/her grasp of the issues. The author’s work is open to public criticism or praise from other academics. This *peer review* is an important part of the quality control of academic work. Information you come across on private or institutional websites doesn’t undergo this process. Of course, not all authors are authorities in their field. You will begin to recognize the names of authors who have published important studies on your topic as your reading progresses. If you find an author has written an article in a good journal or published a book with a good publishing company, or if you find other authors cite the person’s work, it probably means that you can consider this author an authority on your topic for the purposes of your project. [[1]](#footnote-1)

**Text 2:** Provenance

Is the author’s place of work mentioned? This might tell you whether there is likely to have been an academic study behind the facts or opinions given. If the author works for a public body, there may be publication rules to follow and they may even have to submit their work to a publications committee before it is disseminated. They are certainly more likely to get into trouble if they include scurrilous or incorrect material. Another issue to consider is whether a company or political faction may have a vested interest behind the content.[[2]](#footnote-2)

**Text 3:**

Try to use recent sources. A book may appear germane to your work, but if its copyright date is 1975, the content has probably been replaced by recent research and current developments. Scientific and technical topics always require up-to-date research. Learn to depend on monthly and quarterly journals as well as books.[[3]](#footnote-3)

**Text 4:**

Look at the extent and quality of citations provided by the author. This applies particularly to articles in academic journals, where positions are usually supported by citations of others’ work. These citations may indicate that a certain amount of research has been carried out beforehand, and that the ideas or results are based on genuine scholarship. If you doubt the quality of the work, these references might be worth looking at. How up to date are they? Do they cite independent work, or is the author exclusively quoting him/herself or the work of one particular researcher?[[4]](#footnote-4)

**Task 2: (Group work) Use the criteria mentioned in TASK 1 to design a checklist for assessing the reliability of a source of information.**

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| --- |
| **Assessing the reliability of the source of information** |
|  |

**Task 3: Match the definition with the appropriate term.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Definition**  | **Term**  |
| 1-Books, periodicals, maps, charts, forms, pictures, videotapes, or any source of information disseminated by a government agency or government-funded agency. 2- A book containing a comprehensive compilation of content in a branch of study with the intention of explaining it. They are produced to meet the needs of educators, usually at educational institutions.3-A collection of academic papers published in the context of an academic conference or workshop.4- Scholarly publication containing articles written by researchers, professors and other experts. They focus on a specific discipline or field of study. They are intended for an academic or technical audience, not general readers.5- Books with professional content for the aim of starting or perfecting an occupation.6- Books that are marketed for the general audience. 7- Books written by experts-- researchers, professionals, professors, and other scholars in specific fields intended for academic discussion and research presentation and review. 8- A long piece of academic writing based on original research, submitted as part of an undergraduate or postgraduate degree. 9- A book or set of books giving information on many subjects or on many aspects of one subject and typically arranged alphabetically.10- General interest periodicals intended for the general audience. 11- Books that contain instructions or advice about how to do something or the most important and useful information about a subject. 12- A document from a website which can be displayed in a web browser.  | a-Popular sources (Newspapers and Magazines)b- Professional books c-Trade booksd-Conference proceedings.e-Journals f-Government Documents.g-Theses & Dissertations.h- Scholarly Books / Book Chapters.i-Encyclopaedias j-Handbooksk-Text booksl- webpage  |

**Task 4: which of the sources mentioned in the previous task are the most appropriate to do literature review? Why?**

**Keep in mind**

* The extent of the reliability of certain sources does not mean that you do not need to double check the information mentioned in them.
* Always make sure that what is mentioned in a source are facts supported by evidence and logical arguments.
* Keep an open mind, challenge the acceptable, consider all the aspects of a topic in a balanced and objective way and support your position with up-to-date information.
1. Louisa Buckingham, *Doing a Research Project in English Studies: a Guide for Students,* (Oxon: Routledge, 2016),p 29-30. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Kathleen McMillan and Jonathan, The Study Skills Book, 3d ed. (Harlow: Pearson, 2012), p136. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. James D. Lester and James D. Lester, Jr., *Writing Research Papers : a Complete Guide,* 14th ed. ( Boston: Pearson, 2012), p121. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Kathleen McMillan and Jonathan, The Study Skills Book, 3d ed. (Harlow: Pearson, 2012), p139. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)