Checklist for Evaluating Resources

✓ **Author** – The source needs an author, not a fake online blog name or some other unidentifiable pen name. An author name lets you know that someone stands behind the work.
  
  *Go a step further: Google the author’s credentials and other works.

✓ **Date** – Check for a date or see when the website was last updated. Checking links to outside sources to make sure they work can also clue you in to if a website is current.
  
  *Remember: Knowing the date can be an important depending on your instructor or your field’s qualifications for what is considered current/relevant material.

✓ **Sources** – The article should be properly cited and use similar academic research to prove their point.
  
  *Remember: you can use the resources they cite to find more information on similar topics.

✓ **Writing Style** – They should be using formal academic language not informal colloquialisms if they want to be used as an academic reference.
  
  *Watch out for improper grammar and spelling, it’s a dead giveaway that you should find another source.

✓ **Domain name** - If the domain name is .edu or .gov the information is most likely credible because a university or the government owns it.
  
  *Watch out for .org or .net because those domains are individually owned and the owner could have a persuasive agenda.

✓ **Overall appearance** – Look for general signs of professionalism in how the website is presented.
  
  *Watch out for clutter and advertisements

*This checklist is mainly for Google and other Internet searches. Library databases provide access to scholarly articles (make sure you check peer-review in your search!).