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.”


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