



# EVALUATING INFORMATION CHECKLIST

This checklist introduces you to the main criteria that can help you determine whether or not you feel confident to use a piece of information as part of your studies; **Authority; Objectivity; Timeliness; Supporting evidence; Relevance**. This is just a guide, you may need to ask different or more in depth questions depending on the context in which it is being used. Note down the information you are evaluating. E.g. book, URL/ title of the website.

## AUTHORITY

Who is the author(s) and what is their source of authority (e.g. what is their academic specialism or professional experience)?

Has a systematic and rigorous process been carried out? (e.g. are references all traceable, is evidence discussed and thoroughly analysed).

Has the information been peer-reviewed or gone through an editing process? (Normally all academic journals include a process of peer-review. You can usually find out what the process is from the journal's website. Also academic publishers, e.g. Palgrave, Routledge, Methuen, Ashgate, Sage, Cambridge University Press and other University Press publishers, also use peer-review before a book is published).



## **OBJECTIVITY**

What is the purpose of the information? (to inform/sell/persuade). Has this affected the way the information is presented?

Has the work been commissioned on behalf of an organization? If so, what steps have been taken to ensure objectivity?

Are the author's own assumptions apparent? Does this undermine the argument being made?

Who is the target audience? Is it for an academic audience or for public interest?

## **TIMELINESS**

Can you tell when the information was created or last updated? (Does it matter for your piece of work?) Is there more recent research available?

If it is a website does it look like it is being maintained?

If it is a website do the links work?



### **SUPPORTING EVIDENCE**

Does the author provide evidence to support his ideas, views and conclusions? What kind of 'evidence' is being used? Is there any data or statistics provided? Has the author undertaken any original research?

Are there accurate references to other sources that you can follow up?

If it is online are there links out to other sources?

### **RELEVANCE**

Is the information too basic or too advanced for your needs?

Is the emphasis of the topic appropriate for your needs?

Does the information relate to countries/groups etc. you are interested in?

### **WHAT'S YOUR JUDGEMENT?**

Taking your evaluation into consideration, would you feel confident using this information as part of or in support of your research? Why/why not?