

What is True?

Library Signature Assignment

Truth is a tenuous concept in our contemporary society. In an era of fake news, it is more important than ever that we are able to evaluate news resources. Determining what is a quality and true resource of information will assist you in your career and personal lives and prepares you for a lifetime of learning. Choose a topic related to contemporary politics such as immigration, climate change, or the economy and locate 3 news resources that discuss the way this issue impacts public policy.

Use the RECAPE criteria to determine if the newspaper article comes from a source relevant to your needs. Not only should the resource be appropriate, it must also have authority through expertise of the author. The information should be current when evaluating current events, although older articles could be used for historical context. The information must also be accurate and truthful.

RECAPE

Relevance: is the information relevant to your needs?

- Does the source help you find more information about your topic and/or answer questions?
- Does the source meet the requirements of your assignment?

Expertise: who is the publisher of the content?

- Is the author qualified or an expert who knows about the topic?
- Is there information about the author(s) or the organization of the website or page?

Currency: how up to date is your information?

- How old is the source?
- Does the website get its information from current sources, and how recently was it updated?

Accuracy: is your source's information reliable and truthful?

- Does the source state where its information comes from?
- Can you verify any of the information by checking other sources?

Purpose: why was your information source created?

- Is your source signed to educate, entertain, or make money?
- Is the source designed to further a political, religious, or institutional cause?

Ethics: what are the values of the author or organization?

- What does the author or organization value about the topic?
- Does the source portray information in a fair and ethical manner?

1. What are the names of the three newspapers?
2. What are the titles of the articles?
3. What date were these articles published?
4. What date did you visit the newspaper website.
5. What is the domain?
6. Who wrote the article? Has the author provided contact information? If so, please list below.
7. Can you identify the qualifications and credentials of the author of the article? If so, please list below.

8. Is the author associated with an institution, company, organization, or agency? List the association below.
9. Is the information easy to navigate, readable, and written with correct grammar and spelling?
10. What information from this newspaper article can you use for your research?
11. Can you determine the primary purpose of the article? Is it meant to be informative, entertaining, persuasive, opinion etc.?
12. Is there a bias to this article? How does this perspective relate to your research?
13. What does the author value about the topic?
14. Does the website portray information in a transparent and ethical manner?
15. List any other observations you found to be important and explain why.

Faculty Key

1. Students should have three newspapers listed.
2. Students should have three titles of articles listed.
3. Students should have 3 dates of articles published.
4. Students should have the dates of when they visited the news websites for citation purposes.
5. The domain is the suffix of a web address. Most news sources will be .com, but .gov or .edu may also be acceptable.
6. Student should have the names of the author(s) and their contact information.
7. Students should list the credentials of the author(s) if available.
8. Students should list the affiliation(s) of the author(s).
9. Students can answer as yes or no for each resource.
10. Students should give detailed information about what in the article is pertinent to their research. Expect 3 sentences at minimum for each resource.
11. Students should be able to determine what the intent of the author was. For example, if the piece was an Op-Ed from the New York Times, they should identify it as opinion or persuasive. If the article was from the Wall Street Journal and was hard news, it would be informative. If the article was a piece from New York Post, it might be entertaining (depending on the article).
12. Students should be able to determine if the article is biased in anyway. For example, a piece written by The New York Times Editorial team may be biased toward a more liberal agenda. And the Wall Street Journal might have a more conservative bias. While bias does not preclude an article from being used. Understanding of what this bias is and how it related to the assignment topic is crucial.
13. This is the most difficult question and students may need some additional direction. For instance is the article is about climate change and the author(s) talk mostly about the negative effects regulations have on business, then one might say that they value business and industry. This does not necessarily mean that they don't value addressing climate change, but possibly that they don't see industry regulations as the means to do this. Also, if an article is about immigration and most of the evidence is about expanding opportunity for immigrants, then one might say they value an inclusive society in which diversity is valued. This does not necessarily mean that the author(s) values an open and unfettered immigration policy. It is important for the students to realize that based on the evidence provided that what the author values is nuanced. The students must understand these nuances in order to adequately evaluate the news article.
14. This is another tough question. Students should be able to determine the ethics behind truth. Are there facts to back-up the claims that the author is making? Can these claims be found in other news resources that are reputable? Does there seem to be extreme information that cannot be verified? This also ties into the values of the author as what is the moral guidelines that the author is following in the dissemination of news?