

English 12
Research Writing
Consider the Source

An essay writer should know the difference between reliable and unreliable sources. Educational institutions will not accept references from unreliable sources. The essay writer should gather, use, and synthesize information only from approved sources specified by the instructor or the university. The essay writer may select published sources that appear in reliable websites such as journals, books, or peer reviewed research articles. The reliability of the data gathered by the writer depends on how reliable the source is. If the writer does not use reliable sources, then he may have a problem later with the consistency, analysis, and validity of the collected data.

What do you mean by reliable sources?

The first thing that an essay writer should know when collecting data and performing research is the ability to determine whether the site is reliable or not. There is only one thing that an essay writer should think when he visits a site - know from experience if the information is good or not. Below are examples of sites that provide reliable information:

- Books
- Newspapers
- Peer reviewed articles
- Peer reviewed journals
- PhD or MBA dissertations and research
- Scholarly articles
- Isolated studies or academic research
- Educational institution websites

Although Wikipedia sites are good starting point to get initial ideas about the essay topic, the background information collected from the site still needs confirmation and checking with a reliable source. Wikipedia sites have no formal control on the type and quality of information published on their sites. This concept is the same with blogs and other articles. Using the search engine to find information may give both reliable and unreliable sources. Many sites also give opinions and reviews. If it is necessary to use the ideas presented in these sites, then it is extremely important that essay writers validate the concept or theory with a reliable source.

Academia writers need to know that government as well as organization websites provide reliable information. Essay writers should use the same reading strategies with printed text to e-resources publications. Websites maintained by educational institutions are more reliable than blogs or personal websites for research. A PhD or MBA dissertation requires a well-balanced approach in presenting statistical data and information. Essay writers should learn how to assess the impartiality or reliability of the web content of a particular website provided in the search engine's search page.

How do you know a source is unreliable?

Academic writers do not need to read all the books from cover to cover. Essay writers will definitely achieve an information overload using this research technique. One approach essay writers could use is to go through the material and follow this simple guideline:

- Note the date of publication and document version
- Look at the table of contents and skim through the identified sections
- Choose relevant information for better results
- Organized information gathered from other resources to confirm reliability

Essay writers should avoid unreliable sites as they need reliable resources to cite and confirm the collected information. Below are examples of unreliable sources that require confirmation with a reliable source:

- Wikipedia
- Blogs
- Forums
- Questionable sites created by organizations
- Sites that provide biased information

Writers are better off confining their research to the reliable sources to avoid the duplication of effort that may be required by confirming the information from an unreliable source.