

Is It a Scholarly Source?

By *Dr. Melissa Olt*

<h2>Source Type</h2>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is the source a peer-reviewed journal? If yes, then continue to next category.• Is the source a published dissertation from an accredited college/university? If yes, then continue to the next category.• Is it a government publication? If yes, then continue to next category.• Is the source a textbook? If yes, then consider using only as background information. Mine the references for more scholarly primary and secondary sources.• Is the source a book? Use discretion. Who is the publisher – a university? Avoid self-published works.• Is the source a website? If so, then exercise caution. You will need to thoroughly vet the website using the categories that follow.
<h2>Authority</h2>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does the source list personal or corporate author(s)? Exercise caution if no author is listed.• What are the credentials of the author(s) listed? Are those credentials relevant to the topic at hand?• Does the author appear well-reputed in his/her own field? Has the source been cited by other scholars in the field?• Does the source include a list of scholarly references?
<h2>Currency</h2>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If the source is 5 or less years old, then continue to the next category.• If the source is +5 years, then the information may be outdated. If you plan on using the source as part of a literature review, it may be acceptable.
<h2>Accuracy</h2>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is the source well written?• Does the author accurately present the scholarly work of others?• Does the source appear biased?• If an opinion piece, does the author recognize and present opposing points of view fairly?• Does the author rely on emotions to support her point of view, or does she rely on balanced and logical support for her argument?
<h2>Relevance</h2>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does the source closely relate to your topic or research question?• Who is your audience? Does the source contain information that is appropriate for the proficiency level of your audience? For example, an article containing advanced concepts and jargon may not be appropriate for a novice audience.