
CC0001
INQUIRY AND
COMMUNICATION IN AN
INTERDISCIPLINARY WORLD

DR PRASANTHI RAM
PRASANTHI.RAM@NTU.EDU.SG



Copyright Notice

All course materials (including and not limited to lecture slides, handouts, recordings, assessments and assignments), are solely for your own educational purposes at NTU only. All course materials are protected by copyright, trademarks or other rights.

All rights, title and interest in the course materials are owned by, licensed to or controlled by the University, unless otherwise expressly stated. The course materials shall not be uploaded, reproduced, distributed, republished or transmitted in any form or by any means, in whole or in part, without written approval from the University.

You are also not allowed to take any photograph, video recording, audio recording or other means of capturing images and/or voice of any of the course materials (including and not limited to lectures, tutorials, seminars and workshops) and reproduce, distribute and/or transmit in any form or by any means, in whole or in part, without written permission from the University.

Appropriate action(s) will be taken against you (including and not limited to disciplinary proceedings and/or legal action) if you are found to have committed any of the above or infringed copyright.

ASSIGNMENT 1

FROM BLOG 1 TO ASSIGNMENT 1

- 1. P1, Description of General Observations: DAQ**
- 2. P2, Description and Personal Analysis of Significant Observation: DAQ**
 - ✓ **Analysis:** How did you feel or what did you initially think when you made the observation?
- 3. P3, Conceptual Analysis of Significant Observation and Research Question: DAQ**
 - ✓ **Analysis:** What is the larger significance of your observations? What are some relevant concepts that this observation provides insight on and what can you say about them?
 - ✓ **Question:** Conceptual (ideas, not problems), open-ended, and manageable in scope (1200-1350 words)

ASSIGNMENT 1

Due next Wednesday 2359 after class



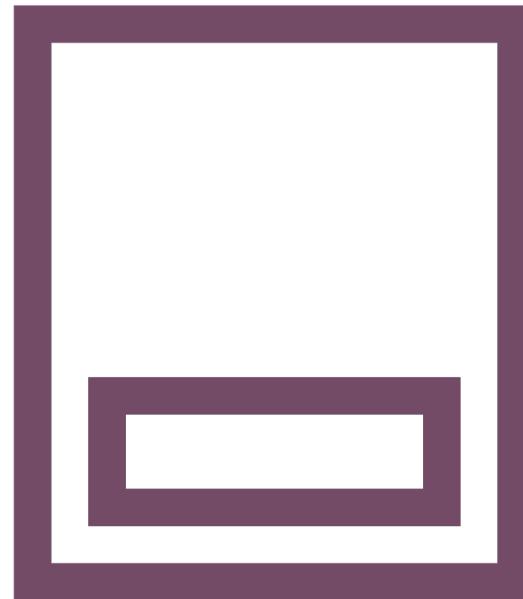
- Word count: **500 words** (excluding title and references if any) +**10% (500-550)** / **Times New Roman or Arial Font Size 12, Double Spacing**
- **Submit in paragraph form** (3-4 paras)
- Your cover page should be a **signed copy of the Declaration of Academic Integrity form** (p.106).
- Your second page should be the **AI Usage form** (p.105) if you have used AI for brainstorming or grammar. If you have used AI for grammar, please submit the ORIGINAL document to “Assignment 1 – Original”
- Submit it as a Word document only and include word count.
- If you are quoting background information from external sources (community op-eds in particular), please use APA citation style
- You do not need to attach your Blog 1 photographs or fieldnotes. However, students doing community must attach the interview transcript.

BLOG 1

FEEDBACK



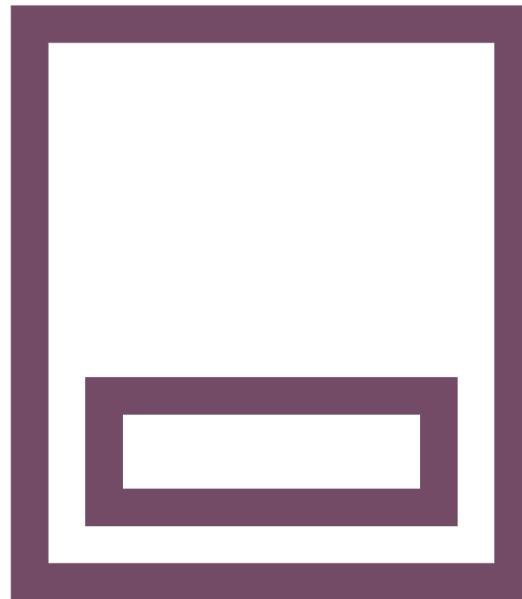
GENERAL COMMENTS



Topic: Only do "place" OR "community" (not a hybrid)

- **If you have chosen place**, you must start by describing the specific building, establishment or street you have picked.
- **If you have chosen community**, you must start by identifying your community, explaining why you are interested, and introducing your interviewee from said community. You can also introduce the key focus or angle of your interview.
- **Note:** if your place observations lead you to an eventual question on a community, this is acceptable.

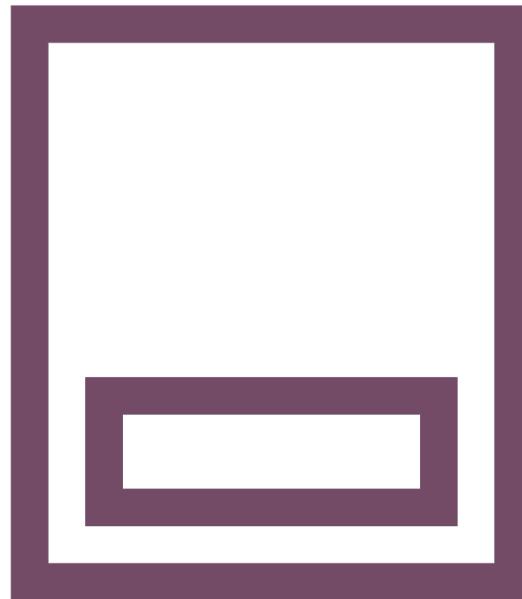
GENERAL COMMENTS



Description: When presenting an observation, you must describe it, not state it as a fact as you might in a scientific report:

- Use a balance of show and tell
- Appeal to your reader's senses where possible
- Be specific when describing (concrete details)
- For example, if you're focusing on a person, just saying you saw someone doing something is insufficient. What was their appearance like? How about their body language? Did they say anything or interact with anyone?

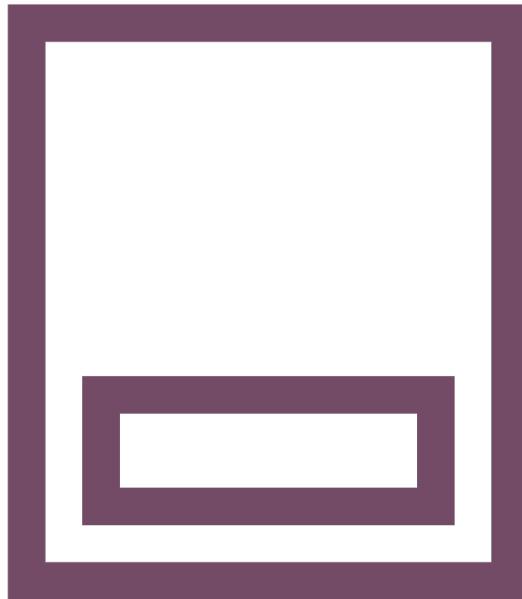
GENERAL COMMENTS



Analysis: Your significant observation should be *significant*

- If you pick a very simple or uninteresting detail, this will lead you to shallow analysis or no analysis at all
- The observation you pick must have sparked feelings (personal analysis) and thoughts (conceptual analysis that will lead you to a question) in you.
- **Rule of thumb:** if you are unable to work with your current details, reexamine your field notes, redo your observations OR pick a new topic entirely that you have more interest in

P1 | GENERAL DESCRIPTION



If your topic is a place, you must first present place description to your reader.

- Identify the place accurately – if it is a mall, which one?
- Which part of Singapore is it located? What is the purpose or function of this place? What are some striking features? What is the layout?
- When did you visit it? What was the weather like that day? Was there anything unique about that day (people, events, objects)?

Converting Blog 1 to Assignment 1

- Present a recount of your visit, use consistent tenses and use first-person: "When I visited [...], I noticed... I saw..."

P1 | GENERAL DESCRIPTION

If your topic is a community, you must clearly identify the community for the reader.

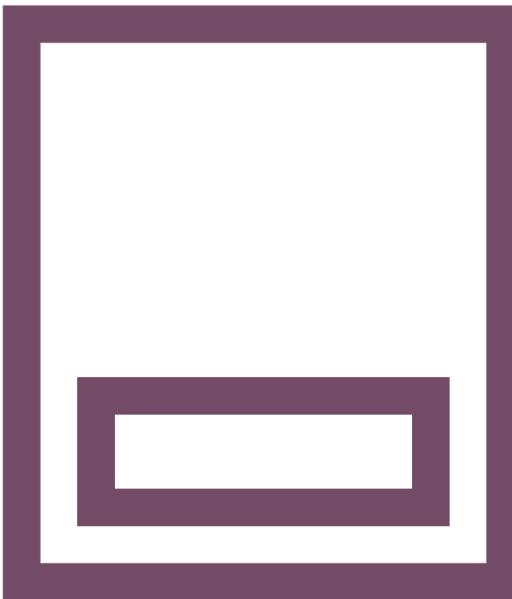
- Who makes up this community? What is commonly known about them? Any current issues that are relevant?
- Why are you personally interested in them? Have you had past experiences with the community or are you a part of them?
- Why have you chosen your interviewee? What is their profile?

Converting Blog 1 to Assignment 1

- Present a detailed picture of your chosen community made up of background information or your own knowledge, your personal anecdotes, and your interviewee's profile.

P1 | GENERAL DESCRIPTION

If your topic is personal writing habits, you must identify a specific angle:



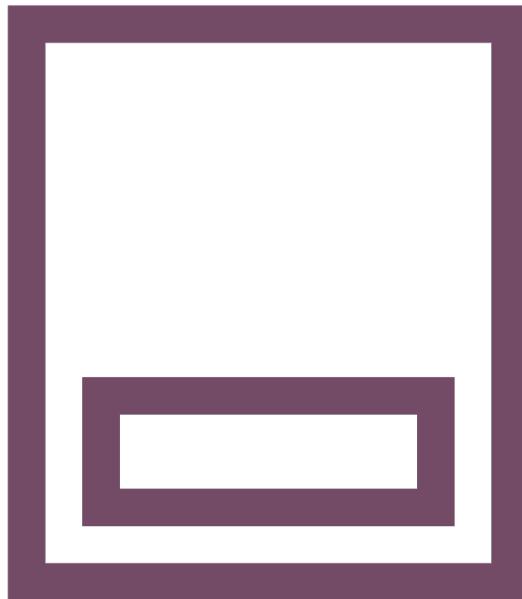
- What is your general attitude towards writing?
- What forms of writing did you examine?
- Which aspect of writing are you most interested in?
- What are some general patterns that you notice about your writing within that aspect? Can you quote 1-2 examples of each?
- For example, "I tend to use Singlish terms such as [...] and [...]"

Converting Blog 1 to Assignment 1

- Present a detailed picture of your personal writing habits & funnel your paragraph towards a specific habit/angle
- For example, Instagram Stories or e-mails or text messaging

P2 | SIGNIFICANT OBSERVATION

(1 DETAIL, 2 DETAILS THAT CONTRAST, 2-3 DETAILS THAT FORM A PATTERN)

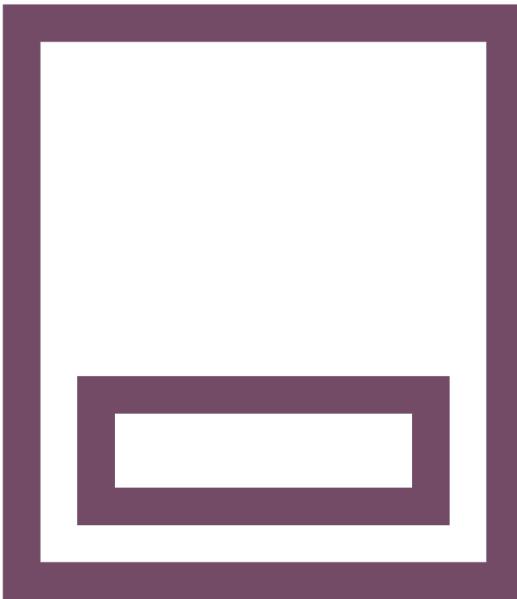


Place: Description of significant observation

- It should be **interesting** or **strange** or **unique**
- If you are presenting more than 1 detail (as a contrast or pattern), they should be aligned.
- As far as possible, it should bear some relevance to your chosen place; it should not be incidental.
 - For example, I went to Yunnan Garden and there was a man talking to his wife about going back to Malaysia. Therefore, my op-ed will be on Covid-19.
- It should not be common knowledge or a generic observation either.
 - For example, I was at Jewel and spotted the indoor waterfall: this is not significant enough because it is a well-known feature. What else can you say about it?

P2 | SIGNIFICANT OBSERVATION

(1 DETAIL, 2 DETAILS THAT CONTRAST, 2-3 DETAILS THAT FORM A PATTERN)

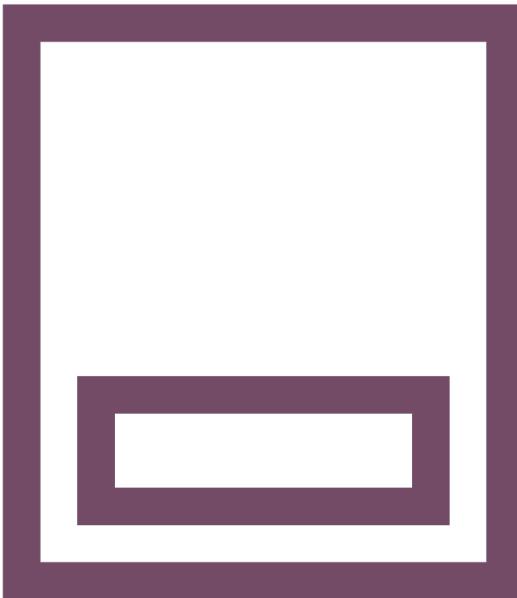


Community: Description of significant observation

- You should focus on **significant quotations** from your interview transcript.
- Your analysis should stem directly from what your interviewee has shared with you; you should reflect and expand on what they have shared with you, and you could even suggest an alternative way of thinking about the same ideas. The concepts you explore in your question should emerge from your interviewee.
- Again, your quotations should all **align towards a larger point you are making**.

P2 | SIGNIFICANT OBSERVATION

(1 DETAIL, 2 DETAILS THAT CONTRAST, 2-3 DETAILS THAT FORM A PATTERN)

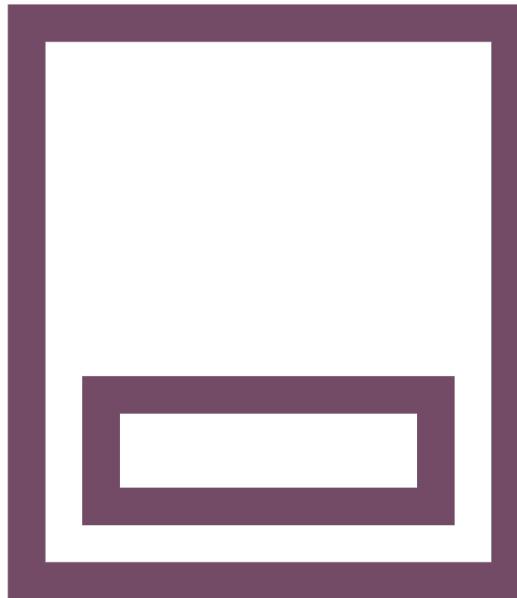


Writing Habits: Description of significant observation

- You should focus on **illustrating a specific habit and presenting its various manifestations**
 - Your analysis should contain reflections on
 - When and why you developed this habit
 - What this habit says about your attitude towards writing, the medium you're using, you as an individual, and society at large
- For example, if you notice that you sound curt over text, perhaps it is because you don't enjoy texting in the first place and see it simply as a quick way to communicate information – perhaps, you're friendlier in person. At the same time, maybe your curtness over text results in people misunderstanding you.

P2 | SIGNIFICANT OBSERVATION

(1 DETAIL, 2 DETAILS THAT CONTRAST, 2-3 DETAILS THAT FORM A PATTERN)



Analysis of significant observation

- Your analysis cannot be a repetition of your Os, an expansion of your O, or an introduction of another O. That means your description was not well-planned.
- The analysis is a reflection on what you observed.
 - **Personal:** How does it make you feel and why? What were your initial thoughts or assumptions prior to this O?
 - **Conceptual:** What connections can you make between what you saw and what you know? Cause and effect? Challenges? What might be the larger implications (positive or negative) of your observations? What related ideas does this remind you of?

ACTIVITY 4.1

WHAT IS
CONSIDERED
PLAGIARISM



Plagiarism refers to using someone else's ideas, information, or graphics in your writing without acknowledging the source(s).



Familiarise yourself with
NTU's Academic Integrity
resources.



CITATION



- Be careful not to **self-plagiarise** - Every piece of research you submit must be original and new
- Whether you quote directly or paraphrase, you must provide the appropriate APA citation:
 - **In-text citation**
Rental flat communities tend to be subjected to stronger police presence, which can "[perpetuate] a sense of insecurity and danger, distrust and surveillance" (Teo, 2018).

CITATION



- If you are paraphrasing, ensure you are not simply switching 1-2 words for synonyms, or it may still count as plagiarising:
 - **Original quote:** "perpetuated a sense of insecurity and danger, distrust and surveillance" (Teo 2018)
 - **Paraphrased:** Police presence in rental flat communities can perpetuate a sense of insecurity and danger, suspicion and surveillance."
 - **X Too similar to the original**

“CLEANERS? WHY SHOULD I CARE?”

An op-ed by Hiroki James Lee



LEARNING FROM LEE'S OP-ED

- **D:** Vivid description of both the washroom and the lone cleaner that is detailed and appeals to the senses
- **A:** Conceptual analysis in relation to the idea of **neglect** (evidence from paragraph 1); **desensitization** (evidence from conversations); and ultimately the **lack of appreciation** (evidence from paragraph 2)
- **Q:** Conceptual and open-ended question with the keywords “appreciation,” “cleaners,” and “Singapore”

LEARNING FROM LEE'S OP-ED

What might we revise for clarity in DAQ?

❑ Paragraph I: Orienting your reader

- ❑ Where exactly is this washroom?**
- ❑ Where/how is the writer making these observations?**
- ❑ Could we see more of a first-person recount (*I noticed...I walked towards...*)?**

LEARNING FROM LEE'S OP-ED

What might we revise for clarity in DAQ?

- Paragraph 2: Grouping your details to align your analysis & question**
- Slight reorganization:** Para 1's **detail of the student ignoring the cleaner** and Para 2's **detail of the cleaner's uncomfortable resting area** could be merged as a large significant observation (pattern) that collectively shows a lack of appreciation towards cleaners

LEARNING FROM LEE'S OP-ED

What might we revise for clarity in DAQ?

- Paragraph 3: Sharpening the analysis**
- It would be stronger if the analysis highlighted how Detail 1 is related to **societal attitudes** while Detail 2 is related to the **institutional attitudes** (workplace).



EXERCISE: REFLECTING ON YOUR RQ

Using the concepts you identified in Blog 1 and my feedback, craft a **conceptual research question** that is open-ended and rooted in your significant observation & analysis:

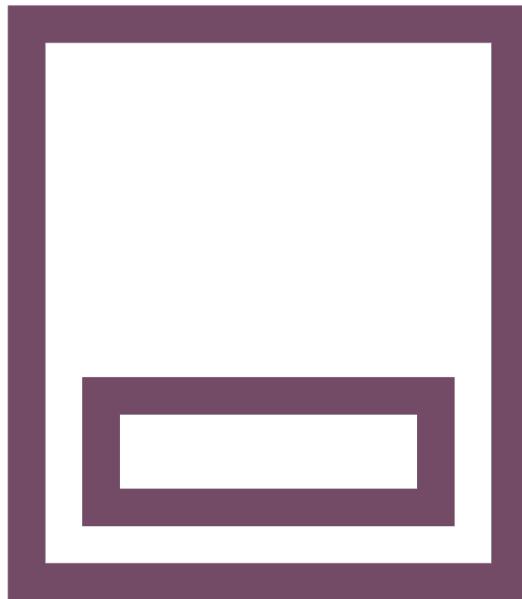
- Ensure that your question has 2-3 keywords (such as cleaners, appreciation and Singapore in Lee's op-ed)
- This is to ensure that you can easily find academic articles on OneSearch, Google Scholar, and so on



MOVING PAST ASSIGNMENT 1

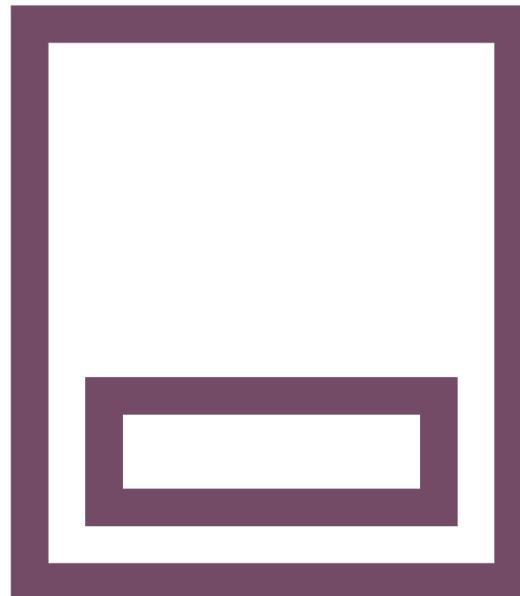
How do we begin addressing our research question?

THE OP-ED STRUCTURE



- **Description, Analysis, Question (DAQ)**
 - Blog 1 and Assignment 1
- **Source 1: Summary & Evaluation**
Source 2: Summary & Evaluation
 - Blog 2
- **Synthesis**
Conclusion
 - Drafts 1 and 2, Assignments 2 and 3

THE OP-ED STRUCTURE

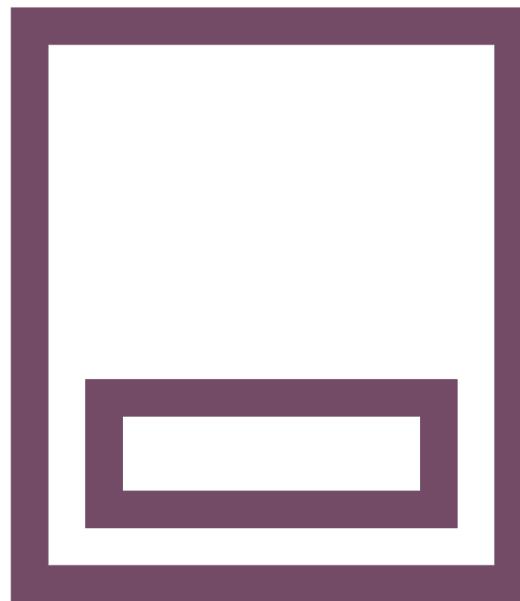


In order to address your research question, you will be searching for 2 reliable and credible academic sources.

They should:

- Contain a **main argument that is relevant to your topic** (a stance, a point of view)
- Provide you with **new or critical vocabulary** (phrases, concepts, frameworks) to elevate your response to the question

THE OP-ED STRUCTURE



In order to address your research question, you will be searching for 2 reliable and credible academic sources.

They should not be:

- A listicle – for e.g., “Top five ways to write a good email”
- Merely factual – for e.g., An encyclopedia article that states the various health risks of gambling

SOURCE 1

Reliable source: IPS dialogue session with key panelists then-DPM Tharman Shanmugaratnam and Professor Tommy Koh (former ambassador-at-large for MFA) – we expect them to provide reliable information based on their experience

Relevant source: They are discussing the lack of appreciation in Singapore towards professions such as cleaners – addresses the RQ

Possible limitations: (1) Dialogue, not a journal article – claims may not be presented with sufficient explanation or reasons (2) Lack of consensus between speakers – harder on Lee to engage with the source without a clear standpoint

HOMEWORK

Please read Paragraph 5 of Lee's op-ed at home before next week's lesson and consider the following:

- I. Paragraph 4:** What should be covered in a source summary?
 - 2. Paragraph 5:** What should be covered in a source evaluation?
-



UNIT 6:

FINDING

REPUTABLE

SOURCES





NEWS ARTICLES

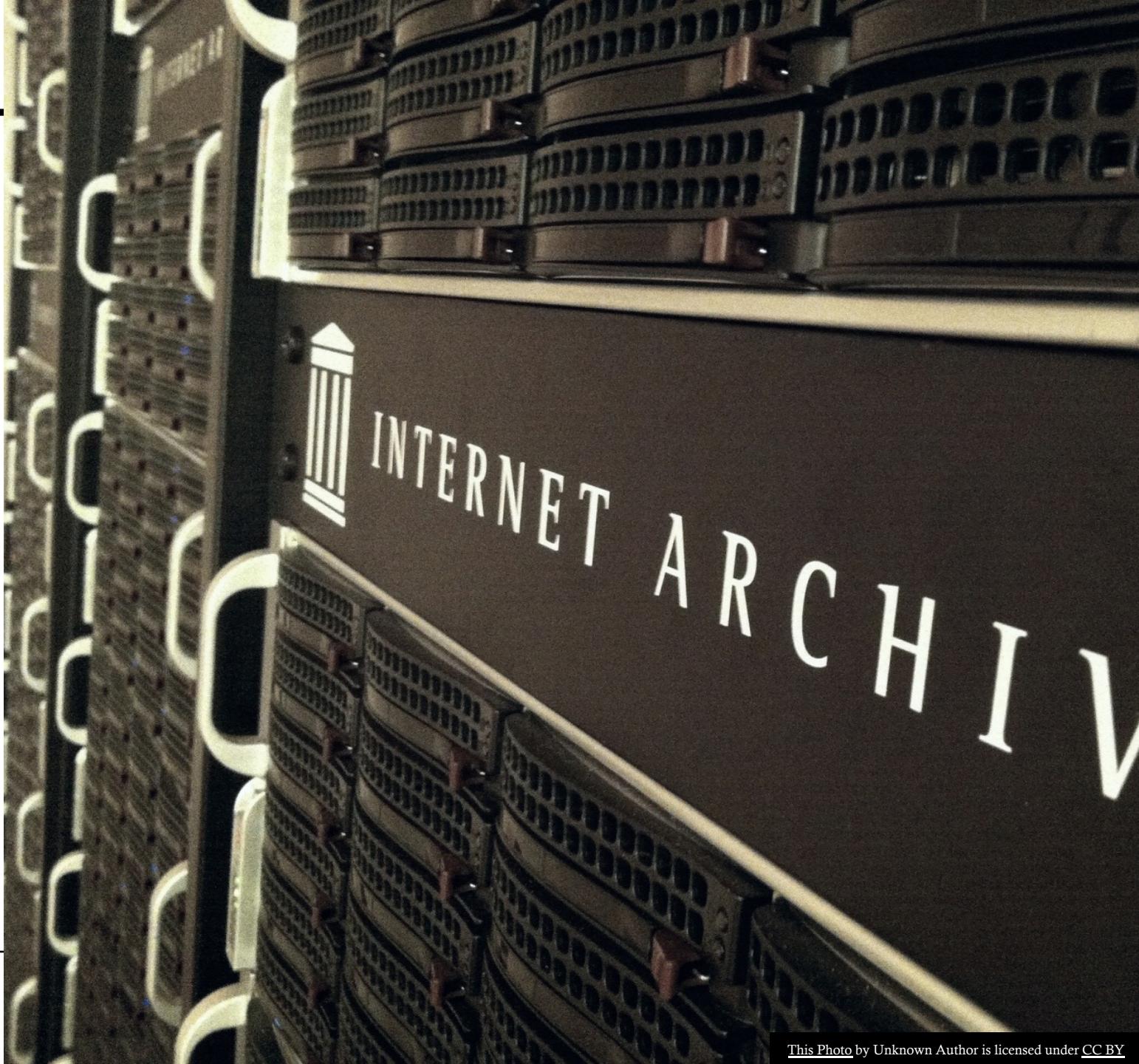
If you are citing a news article, ensure it is from a reputable source:

- Channel News Asia, The Straits Times, New York Times, BBC

Do not cite information from tabloids or sources that do not verify before posting:

- The Sun, TMZ, ThoughtCatalog
-

HOW DO I FIND RELIABLE SOURCES?



ACTIVITY 6.3

USING ACADEMIC SEARCH ENGINES



One Search - NTU Library database



DR-NTU (Digital Repository of NTU)



Factiva and Nexis Uni (text-based search engines)



Factiva, Academic One File custom links for access
to subscription-only newspapers and magazines

ACTIVITY 6.3

USING ACADEMIC SEARCH ENGINES



BrowZine (for scholarly e-journals)



Google Scholar (link to NTU account)



Government websites (ministries)



Accredited institutional sites (for e.g. SingStat)

Video on evaluating sources: [Link](#)

Helpful Guides on Source Credibility

The C.R.A.A.P. Test offers a series of questions you can ask to discern if a source is reliable.

C	Currency: <i>The timeliness of the information.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• When was the information published or posted? Revised or updated?• Does your topic require current information, or will older sources work as well?
R	Relevance: <i>The importance of the information for your needs.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does the information relate to your topic or answer your question?• Who is the intended audience? / an appropriate level?
A	Authority: <i>The source of the information.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who is the author/publisher/source/sponsor?• What are the author's credentials or organizational affiliations?• Is the author qualified to write on the topic? / contact information?
A	Accuracy: <i>The reliability, truthfulness and correctness of the content.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where does the information come from? / supported by evidence?• Has the information been reviewed or refereed?• Does the language or tone seem unbiased and free of emotion?
P	Purpose: <i>The reason the information exists.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the purpose of the information? Is it to inform, teach, sell, entertain or persuade?• Does the point of view appear objective and impartial?• Are there political, religious, institutional or personal biases?

<https://www.academic-englishuk.com/evaluating-sources>
(Academic English UK, 2018)