

Activity: Credibility

Website Credibility

Instructors will need to provide printed copies of website pages for this activity. In this activity, you will practice determining the credibility of websites using established criteria.

Directions: Use the examples provided showing pages from two websites to determine if they are credible or not-credible examples. Then write a detailed explanation of why they are credible or not credible, using at least three criteria for determining credibility from the following list:

- Signs of academic endorsement
- Currency
- Relevance
- Publishing information
- Author's credentials
- Peer review
- Scholarly language and a neutral tone
- Scholarly purpose
- Well-written and error-free
- High-quality sources and references

Your response should include a 250- to 350-word explanation of why each website is credible or not credible, using at least three established criteria from the list above.

Sample responses:

*The Mayo Clinic example is credible based on these reasons: Established, unbiased publisher. **The Mayo Clinic**: world-renowned, award-winning hospital, established scholarly publisher, clear conflict of interest posting. (authority/bias) The article is written by a credentialed and award-winning published author (Dr. Brent A. Bauer) who is also a board-certified medical doctor and affiliated with a respected hospital and publisher; he specializes in scientific evaluation of alternative therapies. (authority) This site is a consumer resource backed by established, not-for-profit entity with an editorial board to vet content. (authority/bias) Language and tone are neutral and professional. (content)*

*The Natural News example is a not-credible source, based on these reasons: Biased publisher: **Natural News** makes health and scientific claims not backed by scientific evidence; this publication is not part of the scholarly medical publishing community.*

(bias) The author's (Dr. Jockers) credentials are less established, certifications seem less academically rigorous, and his background is lacking in scientific research to back health claims. He is affiliated with "maximized living" and acts as a brand ambassador (selling products).

The Natural News website is a popular resource that is not affiliated with an established medical or scientific entity. It is a for-profit entity and has no presence outside of the Internet. Language is casual in tone and uses hyperbole ("amazing," "loaded with") and attributes kombucha to having a positive impact on Ronald Reagan without substantiating the claim. Sources cited are non-scholarly, including Wikipedia. The Website page contains ads for other "sensational" products; ads are not clearly marked as such.