To identify a good source, use the **CRAAP test**:

C – Currency

R – Relevance

A – Authority

A – Accuracy

P – Purpose

Currency: Is the source the most up-to-date available?

Relevance: Is the source relevant to your topic? Is it too complex? If it is filled with jargon that goes over your head or beyond the expertise demanded by your course level, it may not be a good fit. Is it too simple? If it is lacking in concrete, professionally-vetted information, it may not be a good fit.

Authority: Who is the writer/publisher? What else have they published? Are they considered experts in their field? Do they have educational/professional credentials that would further establish their authority?

Accuracy: Can you verify the source's accuracy with common knowledge? Was the source peer-reviewed? Is the publisher known for credible, professional publications? Does the source include citations for external, credible research? Does it include concrete data and statistics?

Purpose: What is the source intended to do? Who is the intended audience? Is it meant to inform? Is it meant to entertain? Is it arguing a particular point? Is the source presented on a foundation of fact, or is it presenting an opinion?

What is a peer-reviewed source?

An article that is published in a peer-reviewed journal has passed inspection by a panel of experts in its field. All databases Pitts Library subscribes to have a box that can be checked to return only peer-reviewed articles.

What are primary and secondary sources?

Primary sources are original works, and secondary works use primary sources as a springboard for interpretation. Examples of primary sources include news clips, diaries, or newspapers. An example of a secondary source is an article that analyzes a news clip and argues its own conclusions.