How Do I Evaluate Which Sources Are Best For My Research?

Ask these questions to evaluate the quality of your source!

**Currency: The timeliness of the information**
- When was the information published or last updated?
- Have newer articles been published on your topic?
- Are links or references to other sources up to date?
- Is your topic in an area that changes rapidly, like technology or popular culture?

**Authority: The source of the information**
- What are the author's credentials?
- Is the author affiliated with an educational institution or prominent organization?
- Can you find information about the author from reference books or the Internet?
- Do other books or articles cite the author?

**Accuracy: The reliability, truthfulness & correctness of the content**
- Are there statements you know to be false?
- Are there errors in spelling, punctuation, or grammar?
- Was the information reviewed by editors or subject experts before it was published?
- What citations or references support the author's claims?
- What do other people have to say about the topic?

**Relevance: The importance of the information for your needs**
- Does the information answer your research question?
- Does the information meet the stated requirements of the assignment?
- Is the information too technical or too simplified for you to use?
- Does the source add something new to your knowledge of your topic?

**Purpose: The reason the information exists**
- Is the author trying to educate, entertain or sell a product or point of view?
- Is there an obvious bias or prejudice?
- Are alternative points of view presented?
- Does the author omit important facts or data that might disprove a claim?
- Does the author use strong or emotional language?

Adapted from Meriam Library, CSU Chico