Evaluate Information Checklist

Whether you are looking at books, the Internet, or scholarly journals, complete this checklist to ensure your information needs are met:

**Who Wrote It?**

The author of the information (whether a person or organization) should have knowledge about the topic and/or expertise in analyzing and presenting information.

Their names should be evident and you should be able to contact them.

**Why Did They Write It?**

There could be many reasons why a piece of information was created: to persuade you to do something, to inform you about something, to sell you something, etc.

Ask yourself: What does the author want me to do with this information?

**Who Was it Written For?**

The intended audience impacts the quantity, quality, and range of what is presented. The more general the audience, the more general the information.

The reverse is also true: the more specific the audience (e.g. researchers) the more the information will be focused and detailed.
How Old/New Is It?

Some topics are more time-sensitive than others. For example, information about the latest computer technology is more time sensitive than information about the first moon landing in 1969.

Currency
- Currency is important for this topic
- Currency does not matter
- The information is current
- The information is not current

Is It Accurate?

Some tip-offs to accuracy include the stated expertise of the author, whether the article cites the sources used, and the care taken in presenting the information (e.g. no typos).

Accuracy
- Expertise of author is stated
- Sources are cited
- Text is free of grammatical errors