

# Smart Search: A Student's Guide to Information Literacy



In today's digital age, the abundance and easy accessibility of information make it essential to not only find but also critically evaluate and responsibly use information. Information literacy, crucial for academic success and responsible citizenship, involves assessing the credibility of sources, utilizing information appropriately, and citing it correctly. Given the mix of reliable and false information online, it's vital to scrutinize sources to maintain the accuracy of your academic work and develop well-informed opinions.



## Understand the Context

Always consider the source of the information. Look at the domain name (.edu, .gov, .org typically offer reliable information).



## Check the Author's Credentials

Research the author to determine their qualifications. Content from a reputable expert in a specific field is more likely to be credible.



## Verify with Additional Sources

Look for other sources that confirm the same facts. Use academic databases and libraries to cross-reference information.



## Analyze the Evidence

Evaluate the data or arguments presented. Check for citations and references that support the claims. Quality research is often backed up by evidence (data, references, citations).



## Consider Bias

Be aware of any potential biases. Is it meant to inform, persuade, entertain, or sell? Knowing this helps in assessing whether the information is skewed to present a particular viewpoint.



## Use Fact-Checking Sites

Utilize respected fact-checking websites to verify factual claims. Fact-checking sites can quickly confirm or debunk information, providing an additional layer of scrutiny.

**Remember:** Proper citation not only gives credit where it's due but also strengthens your work by demonstrating your engagement with reliable sources. Always adhere to the citation standards required by your institution.