

BFH Library

Evaluating scientific and humanities resources – Checklist

You can decide based on various criteria whether or not you should use a resource¹ when preparing your research paper. The following checklist provides a basis for decision making.

- Is the resource **citable**?
 Is the resource clearly identifiable? Can it be located again? Is it permanently accessible? (see the Video «Evaluating Search Results» in the Moodle course [Literature search](#))
- Is the resource **worthy of citation**?
 - _ Does the resource contain a scientific question?
 - _ Is the text formulated in a factual way?
 - _ Is it verifiable? Does it contain references to other credible texts? Does it have a bibliography?
 - _ Are specialized terms defined and used precisely?
 - _ Are the research methods and theoretical foundations explained in an understandable way? (see the Video « Evaluating Search Results » in the Moodle course [Literature search](#))
- Who** created the resource? Do you have a way to evaluate the competencies and qualifications of the author(s)? Are they experts on the subject? Professional title, affiliation with a university, and contact information can give clues to the credibility of the authors.
- Where** was the resource published? For example, is it from a well-known scientific journal? Is there a well-known, credible publisher behind it? Or a public authority, an association, a university, etc.?
- When** was the source published? Has the information been revised or updated?
- Is the source **relevant** to your topic? Who is the target audience? Guidebooks, for example, are not suitable as scientific resources, unless you are examining guidebooks or instructional publications as a topic.
- Has the quality of the content of the resource or text been evaluated, for example with a **peer review**? The NC State University Libraries explain peer review in this short video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rOCQZ7QnoN0>
- Open Access**? Open Access publications are available on the Internet at no charge, without subscription or license fees. The fact that a resource is Open Access does not provide any indication about the quality of the content. Open Access publications can be just as scientifically reliable or unreliable as publications that are behind a paywall. They must be evaluated using the same criteria.
 Context about Open Science at the BFH can be found at [Open Science at BFH](#)
- Preprint**? Preprints are pre-publication versions or manuscript drafts of scientific publications, especially periodical articles. They normally have not yet gone through the peer review process (see above). You should discuss with your study program director or thesis advisor whether or not you may use Preprints as resources.

¹ The most important forms of scientific literature are books and journal articles – see the Moodle course [Literature search](#).