The BRATS Method for Everyday Information Evaluation

### Bias of author/publisher

Are there signs of bias in the author and/or the publisher? More bias may affect trustworthiness.  

Signs of more bias
- inflammatory language
- innuendo/insinuation
- single "true" viewpoint

Signs of less bias
- informational language
- focus on evidence
- multiple viewpoints

### Reputation of author/publisher

What kind of reputation do the author and/or publisher have? How can you tell?  

Reputation diminishers
- clickbait content
- obscure
- no credentials

Reputation boosters
- informative content
- well-known
- professional credentials

### Accuracy in reporting/use of sources

Are the facts and/or sources being presented accurately, or are they being manipulated?  

Inaccurate use
- skewed meaning
- cherry-picked details
- out of context

Accurate uses
- true to the source
- accounts for all details
- provides enough context

### Transparency of sources/methods

How clear is the author about where and how they got their information? Can you find it, too?  

Less transparent
- uncited sources
- conceals methods
- misapplies methods

More transparent
- cites sources
- reveals methodology
- task-appropriate method

### Sources used by author

What is the quality and quantity of sources used by the author? Are they sources you can trust?  

Lower quality/quantity
- few sources
- unnamed/uncited sources
- non-expert opinion
- hearsay

Higher quality/quantity
- more sources
- named/cited sources
- expert opinion
- firsthand accounts

### How to use the BRATS Method

1. Find an information source.  
2. Evaluate its trustworthiness according to BRATS criteria.  
3. If you find it trustworthy, then consider using it. If not, then find another unrelated source.  
4. Repeat until you find what you are looking for.

### Tips for using the BRATS Method

- You don’t have to evaluate bias, reputation, accuracy, transparency, and sources in order, and you won’t always need to check all five aspects to determine trustworthiness.  
- BRATS can help you evaluate information sources online and offline. Next time some says something that sound not quite right, question the source using the method.  
- In the age of social media, we are not just consumers of information, but we are creators of information. When we share information sources to dozens or even hundreds or thousands of people through social media, blogs, etc., we are publishers, too. So, be careful what you share. Your reputation is on the line.  
- Before you turn in a research paper, web article, or annual report, use BRATS to evaluate your own work. Are you being unbiased, reputable, accurate, and transparent? Are you using sources that pass the test?

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