

PRINT EVALUATION

Criteria for Evaluating Print Resources

Directions: Your teacher just gave you a research assignment. In class, you narrowed your topic, wrote essential questions, made a list of words (keywords/search terms) that match your questions, and now you're going to the library. But wait a minute! There are hundreds of books and other resources in the school library! How are you going to tell which books will work for you? Use this evaluation checklist to find out which books are really worth your time. Put a checkmark in either the **YES** or the **NO** box next to each statement. When you get to the end of the checklist, if you have more YESes than NOs, you will know that the book is a good resource for your research project.

Accuracy - Check to see if the author has education or experience that enables him/her to write about the subject. The book should be based on fact, not just the author's opinion. Check the spelling and grammar in the text. Make sure the information is up-to-date enough for your topic.

YES	NO	
		I can find the author's name easily on the cover or title page.
		There's an About the Author page that tells me about the author.
		The author has written other books on this subject.
		I have found other books that agree with the information in this book.
		When I look on the back of the title page (verso), I can find the copyright date.
		For my research topic, I need up-to-date information. The copyright date tells me that the book is no more than five years old.
		When I read the book, the grammar, spelling, and sentence structure are correct.
		There is a bibliography in the book that tells me the author read a lot about the topic before writing the book.

Appropriateness – Check to see if the book has features that get your attention and help you to find and understand the information you need. Use the "five finger rule"* to decide if the book is at a reading level that is right for you.

YES	NO	
		There is a Table of Contents.
		The chapter names and page numbers in the Table of Contents tell me where to look for information about my topic.
		The chapter names and page numbers in the Table of Contents tell me where to look for information about my topic.
		There is an Index at the end of the book.

YES	NO	
		When I look in a chapter, there are headings in different sizes and colors that make it easy to tell what each section is about and to locate information.
		The photographs and illustrations help me to understand the information.
		There are captions or labels on most photographs or illustrations that help me to understand the information.
		Extra fact boxes in each chapter tell me interesting things.
		New words are in bold font in the text.
		There is a glossary with definitions of new words in the book.
		The author provides a list that includes extra resources that will help me find more information about my topic, such as books, videos, DVDs, audio tapes, and Web sites.
		When I use the Five Finger Rule*, I know this book is not too difficult for me to read. I know that I will probably be able to understand the information.
		This book is written in a way that really gets my attention. I want to read the whole book!

*The Five Finger Rule is a handy little trick that helps you to decide if a book is too easy or too hard to you to read. This is how it works: Pick any page from the book and start reading at the top of the page. When you come to a word that you don't understand, put down a finger. If you can make it all the way to the end of the page BEFORE all five fingers are down, you should have no trouble reading the book.

Scope – Check to see if there is enough information to help you learn about and understand your topic. Check to see if the book presents information in an order that makes sense to you.

YES	NO	
		The title of the book tells me that this book has information that will help me answer my questions.
		I can tell from the Table of Contents and Index that this book provides a lot of information about my topic that will be helpful and answer my questions.
		This book provides information that does not exactly match my topic, but it gives me extra information that helps me to learn more about my topic.
		When I look at the Index, I am able to find some of the words that match my topic (keywords or search terms), along with page numbers. This tells me that I will be able to find information on my topic.
		The book is arranged so that I can find information easily. It makes sense to me.