

## [Know Your News: Recognizing Good & Bad Sources](#)

Information is everywhere, so how do you know what's reliable? Whether you're doing a school assignment or just want to stay informed, you need to know how to sort out good and bad sources of information.

### **Good Sources**

The more items you can check off this list, the more likely this information is to be trustworthy.

- Authors/reporters are on staff at a respected news organization—or are recognized as experts on the subject
- Basic facts of the story are consistent across different news outlets
- URLs end with .edu, .gov, .info, or a reputable .com
- Reliable sources are cited and quoted
- It's clear what's an opinion and what's factual
- Photos are credited to a person or a news organization

### **Bad Sources**

If you can check off any items on this list, be careful! This might be less-than-trustworthy information.

- Authors are unnamed or lack credentials
- Headline seems hard to believe or sensational
- Shared on social media, but not found on traditional news sites
- Poor spelling or grammar
- Marked as "Sponsored Content" or "Advertisement"
- Sources are missing or vaguely described
- Contains name-calling or unfounded accusations

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### **10 Tips for Getting to the Truth**

To put your news in perspective, try these tactics.

1. What's this about? Looking at an author's (or organization's) "about" page on their website can give you clues as to the values they represent, and how trustworthy they might be.
2. Go to the source. When a news item quotes a person or cites a study, dig deeper. Look up that person or study—and evaluate the reliability of those sources too.
3. Fight bias with balance. Bias can't be avoided—all media has a point of view. The key is to recognize it and put it in context; see what multiple news sources say about a topic before drawing your conclusions.
4. URL detection is important. The suffixes of website URLs can help you understand who's behind them. Some suffixes, like .gov, .mil, or .edu, are only used by verified government agencies and schools. Others, like .info and .org, are generally (but not always) used by nonprofit organizations. Others, like .com and .biz are usually used by for-profit organizations. Be especially careful about the .co and .lo suffixes—they're favorites of marketing companies and startups who may have less credibility.
5. What are you looking at? Even within a single news source—like a newspaper or a news broadcast—there are different types of content. Know the difference between a news article, an editorial or opinion piece, and "sponsored content" that looks like news but is actually advertising.
6. Beware of big news. Amazing or controversial headlines are good for getting your attention; don't let them cloud your judgment. Do a comparison—are the sensational headlines you see supported by the information in the paragraphs below them?
7. Don't believe everything you think. Ever notice how the best news sources are the ones you agree with the most? Deliberately seek out sources you disagree with—they may not win you over, but they'll help you

consider different sides of the issues.

8. Be skeptical of sharing. The internet is great for passing on information—but that also means bad information travels faster and to a wider audience. Take the time to investigate the claims of forwarded emails and shared social media posts.
9. Watch out for faked photos. Thanks to the popularity of image-enhancing software, it's easier than ever to create deceptive photos. Try to confirm the source of news photos before being persuaded by them.
10. Avoid echo chambers. Seeing or hearing the same clever words or phrases across different news sources might mean you need more variety in your information consumption.

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