
An academically credible source is a source that you can confidently reference in your coursework because it is

- **transparent** the originator of the material is clearly stated
 - **authoritative** the information is reliable because it has been rigorously evaluated to ensure that it is accurate and unbiased
 - **verifiable** readers can follow up on the source
-

✓✓✓ **Academic textbooks and journal publications** go through a rigorous process to ensure that the information meets academic quality standards. However, published material can go out of date quickly, either because a field of research is evolving rapidly (eg anything involving technology) or because of external events (eg a lot of material about the effectiveness of bank regulation published before the financial crisis of 2007 is not relevant).

✓✓✓ **Websites of governmental and non-governmental organisations** are generally regarded as credible sources, although not all countries have the same standards of transparency and honesty in reporting data you're your judgement. Government websites have lots of factual information, statistics and reports. Non-governmental organisations are a useful source of up-to-date research reports.

✓✓ **Company websites** provide useful factual information about organisations but remember that the primary function of an organisation's website is to present the organisation in a positive light - your job is to read the website with a critical eye to identify bias. Always find out the name and purpose of an organisation before using it.

XXX Websites like Businessballs, Wikipedia, BBC BiteSize, schools.net are not academically credible sources – the information is synthesised without acknowledgement from a variety of sources and is often not at an appropriate depth of analysis.

x Lectures and seminars cannot be cited as a reference in your coursework. Although they are an excellent way of gaining knowledge and understanding of an issue, the lecture itself is a compilation of information from different unverifiable sources. If you want to write about a concept, theory or idea that was presented in a lecture, you need to read textbooks and academic journals.

? Newspapers are useful if you want information about events, but the quality of research and analysis is often not reliable. If a newspaper reports the result of a research study or government report, you should look for the original source in an academic journal or on a government website, rather than just relying on the newspaper.
