
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
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✓✓✓ **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 However, published material can go out of date quickly, either because a field of research is evolving rapidly (eg anything involving technology) or because of political or economic events that create change.

✓✓✓ **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. Government websites have lots of factual information, statistics and reports. Non-governmental organisations are a useful source of up-to-date research reports. As a rule of thumb, organisations that produce their own research are more credible, but bear in mind that they may have political or ideological beliefs that lead to bias. If you want to find out about a website's affiliations, you can find out about the organisation by clicking 'About' at the bottom of the page. If you're still not sure, look it up online.

✓✓ **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. As a general rule, if a website is promoting products, it is not intended to be used as an academic resource.

XXX Websites like Wikipedia, Encyclopedia Britannica, Business Balls, BBC BiteSize, schools.net are very good at what they do, but they are not academically credible sources at university.

- BusinessBalls is essentially a collection of business and management training tools, designed for people at work, not students. Like many websites for business professionals, it does not produce its own research and it's not accredited by a professional body – the minimum requirement for a website to have academic value.

- BBC Bite-size and schools.net does not provide depth of analysis at the level required for university.
- Wikipedia has lots of useful information and many entries cite academic sources, but because it can be edited by any one, it can't control quality as rigorously as academic publishers.
- Like Wikipedia, Britannica and other online encyclopedias have lots of useful information, but they are not academic sources

All of these sources may provide useful information, but they are not regarded as acceptable academic sources, so you should not cite them in your assignments.

XXX Lectures and seminars cannot be cited 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.
