# **Evaluating Sources in the Fake News Era**

It has always been important to evaluate your sources; however, it is more important than ever to closely evaluate your sources to make sure that you do not spread misinformation. Answer the questions below to evaluate and determine the credibility of the information you find.

1. Authority
2. Who is the author?
3. Is he or she qualified to write about this topic? How do you know? Support your answer with evidence. Google the author’s name to learn more about them if necessary.
4. Where was the information published (name of the magazine, website, etc.)?
5. Is the magazine, website, etc. that published the information credible? How do you know? Support your answer with evidence. Read the “About” page or Google the publisher to learn more about them if necessary.
6. Currency
   1. When was the information originally published or posted?
   2. Has the information been revised or updated? This information will often be near the bottom of online sources. Updating sources as new information surfaces or to correct mistakes is a good journalistic practice.
   3. Is the information current enough to be useful? Keep in mind that some information has a longer shelf life than other information does. Articles about current events may be outdated within a few days or even hours while scientific or health related information may only be good for a few years while information about English or history may never become outdated.
7. Accuracy
8. Identify significant claims that the author is making.
9. Are those claims supported with evidence?
10. Does the author cite where the evidence came from either formally or informally?
11. Is the information biased? Everyone has biases that shape the way we see and understand the world. Most information will not be completely neutral, but responsible speakers use a variety of sources written from different viewpoints to formulate their arguments and counter arguments.
12. How could you tell that the information was or wasn’t biased?
13. Relevance
14. Is the information appropriate for your assignment?
15. Is the level of information too basic or advanced for your audience?
16. Review your answers to the questions above. Is the source credible?