# The Quality Information Checklist

## Use this checklist to decide if a resource is good to use for an assessment task.

* Does it include a reference list or bibliography to indicate it is based on research?
	+ The reference list or bibliography will list all of the books, journal articles and other sources an author has used for their research. This allows a reader to follow up on any references.
* Does it have an authoritative publisher (e.g. an academic press) or has been through a process of peer-review? In the case of a webpage, this would be the name of the organisation hosting the website.
	+ Looking at who the publisher is can be a quick way to judge the quality of a resource. If they are well known, like Oxford University Press, then you can be confident that it is a quality resource.
	+ If you haven’t heard of the publisher before, looking at their website to see which areas they publish in can help you judge their quality.
* Is it written by academics, researchers, or experts in the discipline, for an audience of other researchers, students and academics?
	+ The author’s details should clearly state that they are academics, researchers or experts in the field. Often the details will say which university or research centre an author works for.
* Is it written in a language that is unique to the discipline and assumes some background knowledge from the readers?
	+ The resources you use should be academic in tone, use language that is specific to your field and aimed at an academic audience. For example, the *Cambridge Companion* is written for academic students of English literature and will use language suited to that audience.
* Is the information objective and without bias or self-interest?
	+ Take the time to determine if the resource is subjective in its ideas. Bias can be social, political or commercial. Check if the information is supported by evidence and be aware of emotive language in the text. For example, a personal account of political life will not be of the same quality as a considered academic analysis of a political party.

The Relevance Checklist

Use this checklist to decide if a resource is relevant for an assessment task

* Does it directly address the key concepts of the assessment task?
	+ Read the abstract (if there is one). Abstracts provide a brief summary of an article and can give you an indication of whether or not the article will be relevant for your essay topic.
* Is it suitable to the discipline you are studying? For example, gender issues discussed in the *Journal of Sociology* are different from gender issues discussed in the *Journal of Psychology*.
	+ Most journals are specifically related to a discipline
	+ If you are unsure, looking at the journal’s website can tell you what discipline it is targeted towards
* Is the information written at the correct level, not too simple or advanced?
	+ For example, a high school textbook will be too basic for academic study, but a PhD research thesis will likely be too advanced and detailed for an undergraduate essay.
* Does the timeliness of the information suit the scope of the assessment task topic?
	+ Does your essay need recent information, like statistics or facts that change over time? If so, make sure your resources have the most recent information.
	+ Does the essay topic ask you to look at a particular time in history? If so, make sure your resources are discussing that time period.