CENTRAL GEORGIA

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Using the CARS* Test to Evaluate Information

Information is everywhere on the Internet, constantly being created and revised. How do you tell if it is reliable or not? The CARS test can help. Below are questions to ask about a source to tell if it is credible, accurate, or reasonable. Not all questions may apply to each source, but you can get an idea of reliability by applying the CARS test.

CREDIBILITY

Is the information trustworthy?

Is the author an expert? Did the author consult experts?
What are the author's credentials or affiliations?
Does the URL reveal anything about the source of the information?
(.edu=educational; .gov=governmental; .com=commercial, etc.)

ACCURACY

Is the information correct?

When was the information published?
Is the information up to date?
Is the information fact or opinion?

REASONABLENESS

Does the information seem objective?

What is the reason the information was published?
Is the information factual and consistent?
Does the information seem fair and balanced? Or one-sided and emotional?

SUPPORT

Can you find proof?

Does the author give any evidence or facts?
Can the information be verified or confirmed by 2-3 independent sources?
Are there any obvious errors, false claims, or contradictions?