

Evaluating a Website

0:01	Owl: Welcome to Evaluating a Website, an instructional video on reading comprehension brought to you by the Excelsior College Online Writing Lab.
0:16	There's lots of information available on the internet.
0:20	But how do you know which information is reliable?
0:23	Not all websites are the same.
0:25	Some are more trustworthy than others.
0:29	Before you decide to trust the information you find on a website, you should evaluate it for accuracy and reliability first.
0:37	In this video, I'll go over two ways to evaluate a website.
0:42	One way is to know what type of website you've found.
0:46	I'll list the most common types of websites and describe what they do.
0:50	Another way to evaluate websites is by applying a set of ten questions to judge the accuracy and reliability of the site.
0:58	Let's get started!
1:01	There are different types of websites.
1:03	I'll go over eight of the most common types so that you have a better idea of what they do and which one is right for you.
1:10	I'll give you a description and example for each one, plus the typical domain each one has.
1:17	The domain is indicated by the letters after the period at the end of the website address.
1:22	Ok, let's go over the list!
1:26	The first type is government websites.
1:29	These websites are maintained by government agencies to provide information or services to the public.
1:36	Their typical domain is .gov.
1:40	An example is www.whitehouse.gov .
1:47	The next type is education websites.
1:50	These websites represent public or private institutions that provide educational services, such as schools and universities.
1:58	Their typical domain is .edu.
2:01	An example is www.excelsior.edu .
2:07	Another type of website is an organization website.
2:11	These websites represent groups with a specific mission, cause, or agenda.
2:16	They include advocacy groups, philanthropic organizations, and political parties.
2:22	Their typical domain is .org or .com.
2:27	An example is www.aclu.org .

2:33	Some websites are informational.
2:35	These websites provide information, such as facts, statistics, data, research studies, and collections.
2:44	These websites may include online encyclopedias, research databases, and archives.
2:50	Typical domains can include .edu, .gov, .org, .com, and .info.
3:00	An example is www.gutenberg.org , which is a free online archive of ebooks.
3:09	Other websites focus on providing news.
3:12	They provide information about local, national, and/or international current events.
3:18	Typical domains include .org, .com, or .info.
3:23	One example is www.nytimes.com .
3:29	Many websites fall in the category of social media.
3:33	These websites allow users to network, collaborate, or share information.
3:38	Their typical domain is .com.
3:42	One example is www.facebook.com .
3:47	Then there are personal websites.
3:49	These websites promote a specific person or their ideas.
3:53	These include online resumes and blogs.
3:56	Their typical domain is .com.
3:59	An example of a personal website is Bill Gates' blog, which you can find at www.gatesnotes.com .
4:08	Finally, there are also many commercial websites.
4:11	These websites promote goods and services, such as online retail outlets and company home pages.
4:18	Typical domains include .com, .biz, and .info.
4:24	An example is www.amazon.com .
4:29	There are other types of websites, and many more sub-categories of websites.
4:34	Visit this Wikipedia article for a more complete list of website types: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Website#Types_of_website
4:41	Knowing the type of website will give you a better idea of whether the information it offers is right for you.
4:47	However, you should also apply these ten questions to determine whether the information is trustworthy and reliable.
4:55	1. Is the website trying to sell or promote a particular product or service?
5:02	If yes, keep in mind that the information provided on the website may be skewed to help make the sale.
5:09	2. Is the website affiliated with an organization, group, or political party that has a particular point-of-view, ideology, or agenda?
5:20	If yes, be aware of what their point-of-view, ideology, or agenda is and how it may bias the information provided on the website.
5:30	3. Does the website provide the author's name and credentials?



5:35	Anonymity can encourage authors to make unsubstantiated or inflammatory claims.
5:41	4. Does the website have an editor or editorial board?
5:46	If so, does it provide the editors' names and credentials?
5:51	Information that is moderated by an editor or editorial board may be more reliable.
5:57	5. Does the website provide contact information for the author and/or editor?
6:03	The availability of contact information for the author and/or editor demonstrates greater responsibility for the information being shared.
6:12	6. Is the material on the website peer-reviewed?
6:16	Peer-review is the gold-standard for academic research because it helps to ensure that information is properly vetted by experts in the field for quality and accuracy.
6:27	7. Is the website maintained, affiliated with, or accredited by a reputable organization?
6:35	The reputation of an affiliated organization can provide clues about the value or accuracy of the information.
6:43	8. Does the material on the website contain biases, logical fallacies, misconceptions, assumptions, or unsubstantiated claims?
6:52	Evidence of these problems with argumentation are signs that the information may not be accurate.
6:58	Click here to learn more about how to evaluate an argument for problems such as unsupported claims, assumptions, and logical fallacies.
7:07	9. Does the material on the website offer citations to support claims?
7:13	Are the sources credible?
7:15	In general, websites that provide citations to support claims tend to be more reliable.
7:21	However, the sources of evidence also need to be evaluated for credibility by applying these ten questions.
7:29	10. Does the material on the website provide a list of works cited?
7:34	Providing a list of works cited is not only good form for information that includes research, it is also an invaluable resource for locating additional information on the subject.
7:46	Keeping these questions in mind as you locate and evaluate websites will help you to make the best decision about which information to trust.
7:57	Thanks for listening to this instructional video on Evaluating a Website!
8:02	Visit the Excelsior College Online Writing Lab for more support with reading and writing skills.

