

# Evaluating non-academic sources

## The Currency, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy and Purpose test

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The Currency, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy and Purpose (CRAAP) test helps you to evaluate non-academic sources of evidence, such as a webpage. The webpage could be about a policy, program or practice you are considering using at your school, service or in your classroom.

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You could use this test on your own, for example to help you assess whether information is trustworthy before you share it

### About the CRAAP test

Developed by a librarian at the University of California<sup>1</sup>, the CRAAP test is a set of questions to think about when assessing how much you should rely on a particular non-academic source of evidence. The questions can help you decide if the information is likely to be objective and reliable, or whether there are signs it could be biased.

Some questions will be more important than others depending on your purpose, so there are no hard and fast rules. The CRAAP test is a tool to help you – it doesn't replace your professional judgement.

Standards for Principals  
Professional Practice 2:  
Developing self and others

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<sup>1</sup> Blakeslee, Sarah (2004) "The CRAAP Test," LOEX Quarterly: Vol. 31: No. 3, Article 4. Available at: <https://commons.emich.edu/loexquarterly/vol31/iss3/4>

Many of the questions relate to online sources of information, but you can also use the CRAAP test to assess printed texts such as books.

Once you're familiar with the questions, you'll find that you can weigh up the reliability of a source



**Authority** a e e a . e . e b . e c e d b e ?

Score  

W a e e e a . e ? W a a e e e  
c e d e a . ? A e e e a f e d .  
e a b . e c ? W a e e e  
d . e e a b . e ?

I f a . e a . a . a . a . e  
e . e f e a c . ? C a . e  
e . e e a e  
e . a . a . a . ?

W a c a . e . f . e U R L ?  
. c . . a . e d . e . e . e

I e e c . a c . f . a . ?

I f a e b e , e a . e  
e . e f e a . ?

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**Accuracy** e , f a . e . e b e c e c ?

Score  

I e d e c e e . e  
e . f . a . e d e d ?  
H . e c e d b e e e d e c e ?

A e e f e e c e e d e d ? A e e  
c . e a d a c a d e c e c e ?

C a . e e f e . f a .  
e e e e e ?

I e a . a e b e c e a d  
f e e f e e ?

A e e e a . f . c a .  
e . a . e b a e ?

I e . e e . e  
a . a c a e ?

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**Purpose** e , f a . e . e b e b a e d ?

Score  

I e . e . e . f e . f a .  
a d e c e a ? I . f .  
e . e a . e . a d e . e ?

W . e . e . e d e a . d e c e ?

I . a . d . c . e c e ?

I e . e a . a . a . a .  
a . a e d a f e a . e .  
c a . e . e a . ?

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## Example

**Michelle is a primary school teacher who has recently seen an online talk about learning styles and is wondering, 'Should I use learning styles in my teaching?' She does a Google search for the term 'learning styles'.**

The Google results page offers 2 sites that look worth investigating:

- Webpage 1: a blog on a site called [Sphero](#)<sup>2</sup>
- Webpage 2: a magazine article called '[Are Learning Styles Real?](#)'<sup>3</sup>

Michelle uses the CRAAP test for each webpage – you can read her notes and scores below – and concludes that the magazine article is the more reliable source of evidence, and that learning styles are not evidence-based.

This example provides you with some guidance for scoring using the CRAAP criteria. There's no single 'correct' score so you might find you score a little differently if you look at the webpages yourself – that's fine. If you find you're scoring very differently to the samples and your conclusion about the information is different to Michelle's, it's probably a good idea to talk to colleagues about how you're interpreting the criteria.

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2 Full URL: <https://sphero.com/blogs/news/learning-styles-for-kids#:~:text=The%20four%20core%20learning%20styles%20in%20the%20VARK%20model%20include,reading%20and%20writing%2C%20and%20kinesthetic>

3 Full URL: <https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2018/04/the-myth-of-learning-styles/557687/>

# Webpage 1: Sphero blog

The banner at the top of the webpage telling the Australian reader they can 'now shop locally' is an immediate red flag, and completing the CRAAP test confirms that this is not a reliable site to find evidence about learning styles.

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### Currency: e, f, a, c, e, ?

Score 5

W e, a e, f, a, c, e, Published Dec 2020.  
ed? I, a, da e?

If e e a e, a e e f, c, a, ? Links work.

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### Relevancy: e, f, a, e, e, a, c?

Score 3

D, e e, f, a, e, e,  
a, e e e e e e,  
a e, e e e e e ?

I e f, a, a e e e,  
f, e, -U(c-[]), f, .(c-[]), f, e, [a, []]-, .) [E [a] a E [DC [EBC []], (e, [e e, [La[] ba c) DC [E e, []], e e a c .ed. .a.

Accuracy: Is the information reliable?

Score 2

Is the evidence credible?  
Has it been peer-reviewed?  
Are the evidence sources credible? Are they  
credible academic sources?  
Can you find the evidence?  
Is the information reliable?  
Are the authors qualified?  
Is the information reliable?  
Is the information reliable?

No evidence of any kind.  
No references.  
Isn't emotional but seems one-sided – the text mentions that  
'some critics doubt the efficacy of the learning style theory' but  
then ignores this. Nothing is included about who doubts or why  
they doubt.  
Yes – well written.

Purpose: Is the information biased?

Score 1

Is the information reliable?  
Is the information reliable?  
Is the information reliable?  
Is the information reliable?  
Is the information reliable?  
Is the information reliable?

Information is a blog. The main aim of the website is to sell  
the organisation's products, which include resources about  
learning styles.  
This suggests a high chance of bias.

## Webpage 2: Magazine article in 'The Atlantic'

The content comes from an online magazine, which at first glance might not seem like a good source, but the content is relatively recent, relevant to the question and scores well on the CRAAP test. This content is useful.

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### Currency

Score 4

When was the information published? Published April 2018.

If the links are functional? Links are functional.

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### Relevancy

Score 4

Does the information address the question? Written in a journalistic style but interesting and the information is about whether learning styles are effective so very relevant to my question about whether I should use learning styles.

Is the information from a credible source? American.

Was the information found?

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### Authority

Score 4

Who is the author? What are the credentials? An expert in the field of learning styles? What are the credentials? What are the credentials?

If the author is an expert?

