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LCLM4001

Academic Skills

Research Skills

Trawsnewid Addysg; Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education; Transforming Lives



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Discuss

Imagine you have to write a report titled “**Effective Workplace Communication: Managers and Employees**”:

With a partner, (and *without* the internet or your phones!) briefly discuss the following questions:

1. How much do you already know about this topic?
2. What information do you think you would need to find?
3. How would you find out more information?
4. What kind of sources do you think this academic report should include? Are there any sources a student should not use in this report?

Secondary Research

- **Secondary research: involves the selection and analysis of existing research (i.e. data that has been produced by somebody else).**

What are some sources of secondary research?

- Books
- Journal articles
- Websites
- Newspapers
- Reports (e.g. from the government)
- Reference material (e.g. encyclopaedias)

The Internet

- Can you trust everything you read online?
Why or why not?
- Can you think of an example of something you've read or seen online which you didn't trust?

The CRAAP Test

A test to check if the source you found is good to use for your particular purpose!

C: Currency

R: Relevance

A: Authority

A: Accuracy

P: Purpose

Worksheet Activity 2

- Go to the worksheet and complete **Activity 1** with a partner to find out more about CRAAP!

Worksheet Activity to Display:

Currency Relevance Authority Accuracy Purpose

PURPOSE

1. What is the purpose of the information? to inform? teach? sell? entertain? persuade?
Is the information fact? opinion? propaganda?
Are there political, ideological, cultural, religious, institutional, or personal biases?

3. ?

Is the information supported by evidence?
Can you verify any of the information in another source or from personal knowledge?
Are there spelling, grammar, or other typographical errors?

5. ?

Does the information relate to your topic or answer your question?
Who is the intended audience?
Is the information at an appropriate level (i.e. not too elementary or advanced for your needs)?

2. ?

What are the author's qualifications to write on the topic?
Is there contact information, such as a publisher or e-mail address?
Does the URL reveal anything about the author or source?

examples:

.com (commercial), .edu (educational),
.gov (U.S. government)
.org (nonprofit organization), or
.net (network)

4. ?

When was the information published or posted?
Is the information current or out-of-date for your topic?
Has the information been revised or updated?

CRAAP TEST: Activity 2 ANSWERS

CURRENCY

When was the information published or posted?

Is the information current or out-of date for your topic?

Has the information been revised or updated?

RELEVANCE

Does the information relate to your topic or answer your question?

Who is the intended audience?

Is the information at an appropriate level (i.e. not too elementary or advanced for your needs)?

PURPOSE

What is the purpose of the information? to inform? teach? sell? entertain? persuade?

Is the information fact? opinion? propaganda?

Are there political, ideological, cultural, religious, institutional, or personal biases?

AUTHORITY

What are the author's qualifications to write on the topic?

Is there contact information, such as a publisher or e-mail address?

Does the URL reveal anything about the author or source?

ACCURACY

Is the information supported by evidence?

Can you verify any of the information in another source or from personal knowledge?

Are there spelling, grammar, or other typographical errors?

Reliable vs Unreliable Sources

- There are many different types of sources you can use for research.
- Some of these absolutely **should** be used in an academic report
- Others can be used for personal reference (but should NOT be cited in an academic report !)
- Some shouldn't be trusted ***at all*** (whether for your own background knowledge OR citing use)

Activity 2: Unreliable vs Reliable Sources

- In a group of 3 or 4 use the A3 paper your teacher hands you to race against the clock and sort these sources into a table with Unreliable; Reliable; Possible to Use but with Caution categories

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Wikipedia | ☐ Sponsored studies (e.g. a study on a drug sponsored by Pfizer) |
| ☐ Blogs | ☐ Government Websites |
| ☐ Books | ☐ Blogs written by academics or experts in the field |
| ☐ Forums (e.g. Reddit) | ☐ Company websites |
| ☐ Peer-reviewed journals/ Peer reviewed and published academic articles | ☐ Academic conferences/lectures |
| ☐ Textbooks | ☐ Tabloids (e.g. Daily Mail; Express) |
| ☐ Personal websites | ☐ Self-published Postgraduate Dissertations/papers |
| ☐ Newspapers (e.g. The Times; Guardian) | ☐ Tweets |
| ☐ Editorials/Opinion pieces | |

Activity 3 Answers

RELIABLE	UNRELIABLE	POSSIBLE TO USE but with caution for potential bias
e.g. Books Books Textbooks Government websites Academic conferences/lectures Peer-reviewed journals/ Peer reviewed and published academic articles	e.g. Wikipedia Blogs Forums Personal websites Tabloids Blogs written by academics or experts in the field Tabloids Tweets (including from academics or experts) Self-published Postgraduate Dissertations/papers (**mine for their reference list though!)	e.g. Opinionated articles (e.g. editorials) Sponsored studies Company websites Newspapers (e.g. The Times)**** ***This could also be a reliable source but it is in this category because one must always be careful/aware of bias, even if the paper is a trusted paper

Peer Review

- Peer review is when experts in a subject check a piece of academic work, such as a research article, before it is published.
- They check that the research is accurate, good quality, and trustworthy.
- When you use peer-reviewed sources in your assignments, you are using information that has been checked and approved by other experts in that subject.
- It is therefore one of the most **credible** and **reliable** sources a student can use!

Discuss: Using Search Engines

Imagine you have to write a report which answers the question: **“How does effective communication impact workplace productivity and collaboration?”**

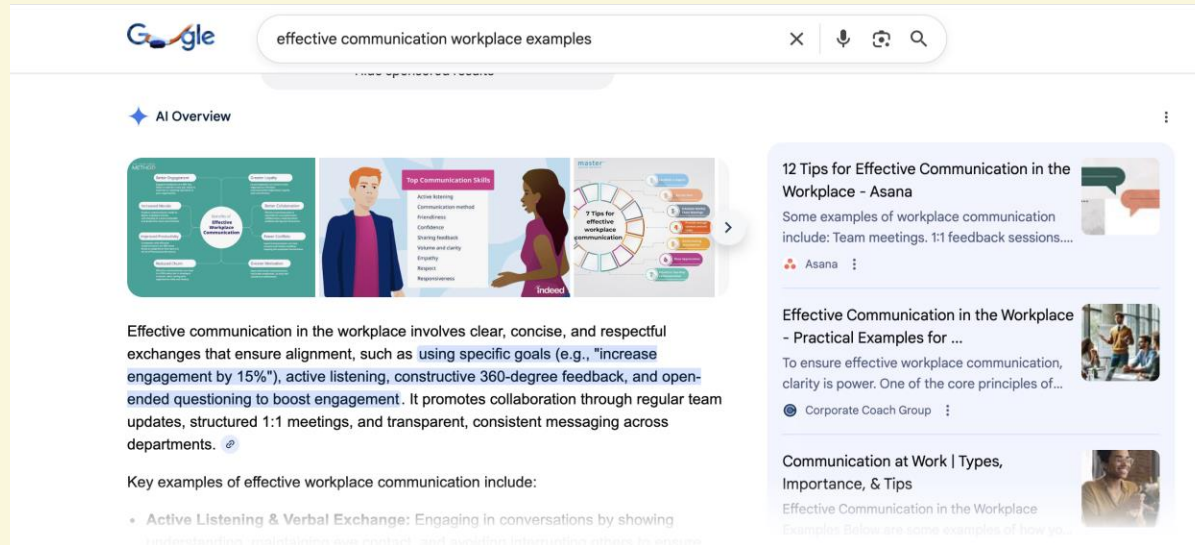
With a partner, find a reliable source for this topic.

Using a Search Engine: Suggested Answers

Do not type the whole question into the search engine

- Choose **key words** to search (these are just a FEW examples!):
 - *Effective workplace communication*
 - *Communication skills business*
 - *Workplace productivity AND communication*
 - *Collaboration AND communication in the workplace*
 - *Impact communication teamwork*
 - *Business communication strategies*
 - *Improving workplace communication*
 - *Employee engagement AND communication*
 - *Communication barriers in the workplace*

Using a Search Enging: AI Overviews



What about those handy AI Overviews when I Google Something?

- The AI overview is only a summary. It may miss important details or include mistakes, so always check the original sources.
- Academic work requires reliable evidence. Open the links and read the full articles yourself. For example, a company website (like Asana) is marketing, not independent evidence.
- AI does not judge source quality. It pulls information from a range of sources, which may be reliable or unreliable.
- You cannot properly cite the AI overview because it does not show a clear author or full source details. Cite the original source instead.
- You **can** use the AI overview to quickly understand a topic or find keywords and starting points for your research, but it should not replace reading and evaluating real sources.
- Remember: AI is a great **TOOL**, but it needs to be used thoughtfully as a **tool**, not as a replacement for thinking itself!

Check Your Understanding!

Follow your lecturer's instructions to check your understanding of Research Skills

Review: A Few Rules

- Be aware of **bias**, especially in newspaper articles
- **NO WIKIPEDIA AS A CITED SOURCE EVER**
- Avoid/**Do not use** tabloid papers (The Sun; Daily Mail; Daily Express; Mirror; Metro)
- No blogs! Even the ones from universities or ‘experts’. They *can* **sometimes** be used for your own knowledge, but should **almost never** be cited.
- If in doubt, think **CRAAP!**

Review: A Few Rules

Again, **DO NOT TYPE THE WHOLE QUESTION OR TOPIC INTO YOUR SEARCH BOX!!!**

- Use **synonyms** if your first hits are unsuccessful
- Refine your search with filters (e.g. dates; specific source types)
- **DON'T GIVE UP!** Research can be **tricky!** It's not always possible to find 10 great sources in 30 minutes. If you can't find relevant hits, **ADJUST** your key words and filters and try again!
- Leave **TIME** for research! It is almost never possible to find all research, **AND** understand it, **AND** take note of it, **the night before** an assignment is due. You need **time** to find sources, take notes, realise any gaps you might have, find more research to fill these gaps, and so on!

Review: A Few Rules

- Think CRAAP when viewing a source before you start to use it!
- Vary search terms-don't try to hit all parts of an essay question in one search
- If at first you don't succeed, try, try...a synonym! Don't keep entering the same terms into the search bar over and over again. Vary the order, vary the word choice, vary the filters!
- Avoid use of blogs, tabloids, and social media as sources, **unless** instructed by your teacher to use them for one reason or another (unlikely! But just in case!)