The CRAAP test is a useful tool to assess information and to decide if it is useful for your assignment or research.

**Currency:** The timeliness of the information.

- When was the information published or posted?
- Has it been revised or updated?
- Do you need the most current information for your topic?
- Are the links functional?

**Relevance:** The importance of the information for your needs.

- Does the information directly relate to your topic?
- Does it help you answer questions?
- Who is the intended audience?
- Have you looked at other sources to find the best one?

**Authority:** The source of the information

- Who is the author or publisher?
- Are they qualified to write about the topic?
- Is there any contact information, such as a publisher or email address?
- If it is a website, does the URL say anything about the source? .com .gov .edu .org?

**Accuracy:** The reliability and correctness of the information.

- Is the information supported by evidence?
- Is there a reference list provided?
- Can you verify the information with another source?
- Has the information been reviewed or refereed?
- Does the language seem unbiased and free of emotion?
- Can you identify any spelling, grammar or typographical errors?

**Purpose:** The reason the information exists.

- What is the purpose of the information?
- Does the point of view appear objective and impartial?
- Is the information fact, opinion or propaganda?
- Are there political, ideological, cultural, religious, institutional or personal biases?
### Popular vs. Scholarly journals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Popular journals</th>
<th>Scholarly journals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appearance</strong></td>
<td>Usually colourful, with articles that have illustrations and photographs.</td>
<td>Articles generally contain fewer photos, but often contain include technical diagrams, graphs, charts etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
<td>To entertain and inform the general public.</td>
<td>To present or report on research in a particular area.</td>
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<td><strong>Scope</strong></td>
<td>Articles tend to be shorter, and present an overview of a topic rather than going into detail. As a result popular journal articles may be useful as introductory background reading on a subject.</td>
<td>Articles are longer and provide an in-depth look at a particular aspect of a topic. There is often an abstract (or summary) of the article at the beginning.</td>
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<td><strong>Language</strong></td>
<td>Generally language is non-technical and doesn’t assume prior knowledge of the subject.</td>
<td>Often includes specialist or technical language, assuming some prior subject knowledge.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Author</strong></td>
<td>The authors are often journalists with little specialist knowledge of the subject. There is usually no reference to the author’s credentials.</td>
<td>Authors are usually experts in the subject area. They are often associated with an institution or organisation in a relevant field? The author’s credentials are listed.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Research</strong></td>
<td>Usually based on background reading and interviews rather than original research.</td>
<td>Presents or reports on original research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>References</strong></td>
<td>Sources of information are not cited.</td>
<td>Sources of information are cited in a reference list.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Peer reviewed?</strong></td>
<td>Popular journal articles are not peer reviewed.</td>
<td>Articles in peer-reviewed scholarly journals are reviewed before publication by the author’s peers. (i.e. other experts in the same subject field).</td>
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**Note:** Use Ulrichsweb to check whether a Journal is peer-reviewed. You can search by title or ISSN.