

**Purpose, Audience, & Tone-** This is an example of a webpage or online article on a school or classroom website that is written by an educator as an instructional guide for students. The tone is personal and conversational, making it engaging for online reading. The writer uses their role of educator to write as an expert on this topic and share their own experiences.

The title grabs the reader's attention and describes what the article or web page is about.

## Guide to Finding the Right Research



The writer uses an image to create visual appeal and capture the reader's attention.

When I first began reading and writing for my college classes, it seemed like I was learning a foreign language. I just couldn't understand why the expectations were so different. But I began to realize the importance of credibility, doing the research needed to really understand all sides of my topic, and backing up my opinions about the topic with strong evidence.

The writer includes a short introduction to share the main point or purpose.

The writer adds hyperlinks to additional credible resources, which is common in online writing.

I also learned that not all [evidence](#) is equal. Some of the things I was reading just weren't credible and weren't supported with strong evidence. I slowly learned how to determine what evidence best supported my claims when writing my [research papers](#). These are the guidelines that I like to use to make sure the research I find is worthy of my time and consideration:

## Types of Evidence and Questions to Consider for Each

### Statistics

Statistics refers to data collected, that is, *numbers and percentages*. Numbers may seem like hard facts, but they still must be considered and interpreted to know if they are useful and accurate. Question the statistics you find:

- Are the statistics recent? Statistics change over time.
- Is the source of the statistics credible and unbiased? Don't believe everything you read. Be skeptical first.
- How do the statistics relate to your claim? Do they really support the argument you are making? They should.

The writer has kept paragraphs short and to the point, which is essential when writing for the web.

The writer uses bold section headers, making the post easy for readers to scan and highlighting the different areas of focus.

### Expert Opinion

An expert opinion refers to someone who is an expert on the topic and their conclusions or decisions about the topic. An example of an expert would be a heart doctor who is discussing heart health. Question the opinions you find:

- Is the person/organization really an expert on this topic? Find out more about the person’s credentials.
- Is the person/organization unbiased or do they have something to gain from their opinion? Be skeptical about why this person or organization is trying to persuade you.

## Research Studies

Research studies refer to research that was done by a person or group to test a theory or to reach some conclusions about a research question. Question the research studies you find:

- How recent was this research study done? The data may change over time.
- Who did this research study and are they credible and unbiased? Again, be skeptical first.
- How does this research study relate to the claim you are making? Be sure it supports your specific claim and isn’t just related to your overall topic.

The writer uses bulleted lists to outline and organize points. Again, this makes it easy for readers to scan.

## Historical Evidence

Historical evidence refers to a situation in the past that works to support a claim about a current situation. Or this evidence could also be a physical artifact that works to support a claim. Question the historical evidence you find:

- Is the historical situation similar enough to the current situation? It should be relevant and similar enough so that it supports your claim.
- Is this historical event or artifact a single isolated occurrence? If so, is this information enough to support your claim? A single occurrence is likely not enough to establish efficient support.

It is vital to proofread and edit your work. Make certain it’s free from grammatical and punctuation errors.

## Anecdotal Evidence and Personal Anecdotes

Anecdotes refer to personal stories about yourself or another person. Question the anecdotes you find:

- Is the anecdote a highly unlikely occurrence, or is it something that regularly occurs to others, too? A very isolated occurrence cannot act to support a claim. It needs to be common enough to show that it could continue to happen.
- Is the anecdote similar enough to the situation you are writing about? Be sure there are no other factors at work that could have led to the anecdote.

Whether you’re just starting in college classes or have been enrolled for some time, taking a step back and reviewing best practices for research is always a good idea.

The writer ends with a short concluding paragraph. When writing for the web, a paragraph can be a single sentence.

This adapted sample originally published in:

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