Source Evaluation Essay

Introduction

Reliability/Trustworthiness

Usefulness

Conclusion
Source Evaluation Essay

Introduction

Reliability/Trustworthiness
Objective: Doing research on your research.

This paper will ask you to practice effective research strategies. You’re going to be verifying the accuracy of the source, along with vetting its credentials rather than just relying on the fact that it "sounds good".
Knowing that a source is reliable is only half the battle, though. No matter how good a source’s quality may be, it still may not work for the purposes you specifically need.

Alternatively, cruddy sources can sometimes be extremely useful. If you find a source that disagrees with your thesis, for instance, and it's putting forth terrible information, you can definitely use that to your advantage to show how ill-informed the other side is.
Your thesis for this essay will consist of 2 parts: whether you feel it’s RELIABLE and whether you feel it’s USEFUL. Any conclusion you reach on these counts is acceptable, as long as you can justify your reasons.
now, to break it down...
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• fully identify the source with as much info as you see relevant. This might include: author/ title/ where it was published originally/ how you found it/ date of publication/ information about the publication source (particularly if there’s no author).
• note how it ties in with your larger research project. Remind us of your working thesis for the research project.
• if this source is a persuasive one, what is its thesis? In other words, what point of view is this source putting out there? How does that relate to your own thesis?
Plan on 1 or 2 paragraphs for this.
There are a lot of options for this. You do NOT have to do all of these, but choose the ones that seem to provide the most relevant information for your conclusions about the source:

- what information you’ve found about the author. Use any bio information available in the source as well as a Google search.
- what information you’ve found about the publication source. Does it seem to have any inherent bias? How can you tell?
- what the date tells us about its relevance or endurance
- how accurate is the information? How does it compare to what other sources have to say?
- where this source is located. Library databases have a different "feel" than general web searches, but that doesn't necessarily mean that one is more high-quality than the other in terms of individual source contents.

Remember to cite any sources that you use for background info or comparisons, both as in-text citation & on the Works Cited.
Plan on 2 or 3 paragraphs for this (perhaps more).
How useful a source is depends entirely on your own point of view. You’ll still need to justify your claims, but this time focus on your own research essay needs.

Choose some of the following options:

- what does this source say? Is this what you need to help you prove your thesis? Or does it offer insight to another point of view?
- provide quotes (one longer one, or several shorter ones) that give a sample of tone, style, and/or content
- describe the writing style, and show how that ties into your own goals
- assess the sources that this piece uses. Do you think tracking down these sources would help you?

This section will be longer if you decide this source is useful, and shorter if you decide it’s not. Either way, though, you’ll need to provide justification (quotes, summaries, paraphrases) for your decision.
Plan on 1 or 2 paragraphs for this (perhaps more).
For this particular assignment, the inductive style feels most natural for most writers. That means you will wait until your conclusion to introduce your thesis. Tell us here what your ultimate decisions are regarding the source's reliability & usefulness.

Don’t stop there, though. Widen the discussion out at the end. Conclusions are great places to discuss any of the following:

• what this source offers to your research project as a whole (ideas it's given you, that sort of thing)
• what the process of researching this source has taught you about using sources in general in your writing
• what steps you'll take from here to continue to gather strong sources for this class
Plan on 1 or 2 paragraphs for this.
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Oh, one final thing....

This paper is all about your viewpoints, your conclusions. It’s perfectly acceptable to use "I" while writing it.
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