ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

credibility: the trustworthiness of a source and its information
reliability: the reputation of a source for providing accurate information
currency: how recently the information in a work was gathered
coverage: the amount and type of information on a topic in a source
bias: an opinion for or against a topic
relevance: the usefulness of the source to a student’s research topic

HERE’S HOW

Step 1: Research each source.  Find answers to questions in this chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Where to Find the Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>Does the source have a reputation for providing accurate, up-to-date information?</td>
<td>back cover, for endorsements by other experts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author and Publisher</td>
<td>Is the author an expert? Are credentials listed? Has the author written more on the topic? Are any reviews available? What does the publisher mainly publish?</td>
<td>jacket flaps, back cover, and preface; Books in Print or online search, for other works the publisher issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currency</td>
<td>Is the material current for the topic?</td>
<td>copyright page or cover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coverage</td>
<td>Does the source provide an overview or an in-depth report?</td>
<td>table of contents, headings, index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bias</td>
<td>Does the source give a balanced view? Is the author’s purpose to inform, persuade, or entertain?</td>
<td>Search for author affiliation, political cause, or business</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Step 2: Evaluate usefulness. You might try a rating system such as:
(1) credible and central to my research;
(2) credible but not central;
(3) unreliable and/or irrelevant.
**Step 3: Evaluate information.** Ask the questions in this checklist:

| Bias                          | Does the author say that he or she has a bias?  
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------
|                               | Does the author present facts and arguments for both sides of an issue?  
|                               | Does the author avoid words that arouse emotions?  
|                               | Does the author use faulty arguments?  
| Accuracy                     | Do facts and figures come from government or university studies?  
|                               | Do the facts match your own expert knowledge of a subject?  
|                               | Do the facts and results match those of other experts in the field?  
|                               | Does the author document sources? If so, what types of sources?  
| Currency                     | Is the timeliness of the information important for your research?  
|                               | Do phrases or footnotes refer to outdated information?  
| Coverage                     | Does the material include new information or a many perspectives?  

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*STUDENT LESSON SUMMARY, CONTINUED*

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*Book 3: Writing, Research, and Study Skills*  
*Grade 6*  
*Standards Lesson Files*  

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