



## Vetting Sources: Why You Should Give a C.R.A.A.P.

Welcome to Vetting Sources: Why You Should Give a C.R.A.A.P. I am Dr. Ondra Dismukes, and I am an Associate Professor of English at GMC.

The sources in this learning module will help you understand why you should give a C.R.A.A.P. when vetting sources for your research essay.

What do we mean by vetting, anyway? To vet, to research, to study or examine closely. Whatever we call it, this is what we do - or should do - each time we write a research essay. Sure, there are many videos and tutorials about how to vet your sources, but one of the best methods I have found is the C.R.A.A.P. method. Perhaps you've heard of it. I like it, and reintroduce it here, in this learning module as a method that reinforces the critical thinking skills we foster here at GMC.

C.R.A.A.P. is an acronym that stands for Currency, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy, and Purpose - the five most important aspects to consider when choosing sources for your research essay. Are you beginning to see why you really should give a C.R.A.A.P.? Let's examine:

**Currency-** When was the source written, produced, or created? How current is it? Academic currency is 5-7 years, but not to exceed 10 years. The newer the article, the more current it is, the better.

**Relevance-** How does the source relate to your essay topic? What does the source "say" or do that supports your thesis statement or research hypothesis?

**Authority-** Here is where you evaluate the credibility of both the author and the source. Who wrote, produced, or created the source? What are his/her/their professional credentials? This matters! Anyone can have an opinion, but someone with experience in your topic area is more credible than someone without it. Also, consider where the source appears? Credible sources, those with the most authority, appear in peer-reviewed sources, meaning the source has been vetted by others with experience in this topic area.

**Accuracy-** Is all of the information accurate that the source provides? Have you checked? You should; this increases your authority! See why you should give a C.R.A.A.P?

Purpose- Why was the source written, produced, or created? To entertain? To inform? To persuade? What biases do you notice in the overall message? Acknowledging biases also increases your authority! Get it?! Now, do you see why you really should give a C.R.A.A.P.?

The content in this learning module is designed to help you understand how to apply the C.R.A.A.P. method when vetting sources for your research essay. First, you will find this video, followed by the video script and C.R.A.A.P.-at-a-Glance, which gives a similar breakdown of these 5 steps to vetting your sources. Next, you will find resources from our GMC library to reinforce these same five elements. Finally, you will find an example of an assignment - along with a template and rubric - that I find particularly helpful for vetting your sources: It's an Annotated Bibliography!

Typically, instructors will assign an Annotated Bibliography to help students develop an all-too-important research skill. Can you guess which one? Yes; RESEARCH! Most Annotated Bibliographies require students to cite your source, including the author's or creator's name and the date it was written (its *currency*). Most Annotated Bibliographies also require you to summarize the source, including its *purpose*; analyze its *relevance* to your essay topic; and evaluate its accuracy and *authority*.

I hope you find these resources helpful and that you will visit the other learning modules in this Writing Nook to guide you along your process.

Write well!