

Currency of Sources and Seminal Works

Currency of Sources

Definition: Currency refers to how recent the information is.

- The “newer the better,” is not always true
- Currency is only one of several areas to consider when evaluating a source
- Current information is not always the best choice for research
(<https://tacomacc.libguides.com/c.php?g=373171&p=2523161>)

Tips on how to evaluate sources to ensure that you use credible, authoritative, and reliable sources:

1. Always ask yourself when the information was published. Online information can be there for years. You are responsible for researching the date that the information was published. Dates are more likely near the top or bottom of the web page.
2. Evaluate the “importance” of the currency. Sometimes currency of the source is very important (for example, for current events). Other times, currency is not that important (evaluating a Shakespeare play).
3. Check with your instructor for questions about the currency of your sources. The Social Sciences prioritizes the most current up-to-date scholarship. Some literature reviews published a decade ago may be of less relevance than one that was published within the year (<https://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu/file/3986910>)

Seminal Works

Definition: Describes books, works, events, and experiences that have a great influence in a particular field.

- These works are “landmark” or are pivotal to the study
- These are articles that present an initial idea of great importance within a particular discipline
- Seminal works lead to a much higher level of understanding in the field
- There is entirely new research done in the field of study
- There is a paradigm shift within the field of study

Example of Seminal Works:

1. Allport, Gordon W. 1954 “The Nature of Prejudice”: A seminal text in Sociology of the psychology of discrimination (www.oxfordbibliographies.com).