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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Criteria | Popular | Scholarly | Trade | Grey Literature | Primary Sources |
| Purpose (Intent) | To inform, entertain, or persuade about current events or popular opinion | To inform, report, or make available original research | To provide news, trends, or practical information in a particular field, trade, or industry | To disseminate research quickly or respond to a public issue | To share the author’s thoughts, experiences, or ideas |
| Audience | General public | Scholars, researchers, and students of specific discipline or field | Practitioners of a particular field, trade, or industry | Professionals and researchers in the same field or industry and/or policy makers | General public, friends, fans, and/or followers |
| Creator | Professional writers, journalists, freelance writers or creators that deal with a variety of topics regularly | Scholars or researchers with extensive credentials and experience in the specific discipline or field | Professionals or freelance writers or creators with experience in a particular field, trade, or industry | Individual scholars, government agencies, non- profit organizations, businesses, and think tanks | Anyone – usually someone with personal experience about what you’re writing about |
| Language (Tone) | Entertaining, non-technical language | Specialized terminology or jargon from the specific discipline or field | Specialized terminology or jargon used in the field or industry | Specialized terminology or jargon used in the field or industry | Very casual |
| References | Sources rarely cited | Sources always cited | Sources occasionally, but not usually cited. This depends on the publication | Sources are typically, but not always cited | Sometimes cited, but usually through links or @s rather than citations |
| Accountability | Content not evaluated by experts in the field; often published or produced by commercial organizations | Usually reviewed by a subject expert or board of subject experts (peer review) | Content may be evaluated by experts in the field; often published or produced by a trade association | Expert review differs for different kinds of grey literature. Many may not be reviewed at all | None |

**How to Find Different Types of Info**

**Popular**

* Newspapers – Newspaper Source Plus is a library database that works great for this
  + You can also find news sources through the other library databases under Newspapers & News Sources on the databases list
* Magazines – search for the magazine title on library.gmu.edu and follow the links that come up

**Scholarly**

* Almost all library databases contain scholarly information: look for sources labeled scholarly, peer-reviewed, and/or academic.

**Trade**

* The easiest way to find trade publications is to search on Google to find publication names.
  + For example – political science trade publications
* Then, use the library’s website to locate that publication

**Grey Literature**

* Government documents – Google is your best friend here. Try limiting to sites ending in .gov or .mil to find government information.
  + Example – foreign policy site:.gov
* The site function on Google also works for other websites – try .edu, .org, .co.uk, or any other endings.
  + You can even do parts of sites – nytimes.com
* Grey literature can also be found by Googling the creator’s name. Other examples of searches to try include:
  + Political science expert writes
  + Environmental think tank publications
  + Religion site:.org

**Primary Sources**

* Finding these can be tough, but one of the best ways is looking at social media
  + Use hashtags and other searching on your favorite platform
  + You can also use the site tool from above:
    - Political science expert site:twitter.com
* Blogs, YouTube videos, podcasts, and other media also work as primary sources (this varies depending on your topic) – Google is your best friend here.