

PTK Honors in Action:

# **Identifying Academic Sources**

Presented by

Catherine Blass, Greenville Tech Comm. College, Greenville, SC  
and Kate Santhuff, Cape Fear Comm. College, Wilmington, NC

# Honors in Action Program Guide

Highlights provided in this presentation from Honors Program Guide, pages 29-33



## Identifying and Analyzing Academic Sources

### A SCREENING PROCESS

Phi Theta Kappans require an efficient and effective method for identifying great academic sources for informed action. Given that not all academic sources are created equal, here are two preliminary searches and questions for identifying and evaluating sources for HIA Projects.

### PRELIMINARIES

After determining the chapter's research question and theme, the question may be organized into appropriate search terms and key words.

### EXAMPLE

#### Theme 4: Architecture and Design of Play

How does the design and structure of fitness centers influence the experience of exercise as play?

### Possible Initial Search Terms:

gym design  
fitness center layout  
home and commercial gyms  
sport exercise and play

These terms can be searched via your library's databases and other available resources, such as Google Scholar. It is important to remember that the research librarians on your campus can assist you as you search for your academic sources. In the example provided above, students might also look for specific fitness center designs and designers who have conducted research on this particular phenomenon.

### FIRST SEARCH: TYPE AND RELEVANCY

The first search will use the initial search terms identified and can be reviewed for both the types of texts found and their relevance. However, remember that you are seeking academic sources. Academic or scholarly sources are well-researched texts that add to the body of knowledge within a given field of study and have been vetted by other experts in that field (University of Illinois, 2020). Usually, such sources have the following qualities:

1. Clear and accurate reference to and appropriate citation of the work of other researchers and scholars ("What are the publication dates?")
2. Located in a peer-reviewed journal or collection, and
3. Clear identification of the author as a researcher/scholar along with their credentials.

### TYPE OF SOURCES

Within that definition, academic sources today can be primary or secondary and can be presented in different learning modes.

**Primary academic sources** may include interviews with the researcher/scholar on a subject within their expertise, poster presentations or peer-reviewed published articles of research conducted, etc. In short, a primary academic source is one in which the researcher responsible for knowledge creation is presenting the research.

**Secondary academic sources** may include literature reviews on a given subject, discussions/analyses of research done by others, etc. In short, a secondary academic source is one in which the discussion concerns a secondhand review of others' research.

# What is an “Academic Source” Anyway?

According to University of Illinois Library:

- Same as a scholarly source
- Interchangeable term with “peer-reviewed”
- Guarantees a certain level of corroboration in the field of study

**C**

**Currency:** The timeliness of the info

**R**

**Relevance:** How the info fits your needs

**A**

**Authority:** The source of the info

**A**

**Accuracy:** Reliability and correctness of the info

**P**

**Purpose:** The reason the info exists

## **Currency: is the source old or new?**

- When was the information published or posted?
- Has the information been revised or updated?
- Does your topic require current information or will older sources work as well?
- Are the links functional?

## **Relevancy: does the source meet the needs of my research?**

- Does the information relate to your topic or answer your question?
- Who is the intended audience?
- Is the information at an appropriate level (not too elementary or advanced for your needs)?
- Have you looked at a variety of sources before determining this is one you will use?

## **Authority: is the source formal or informal?**

- Who is the author, publisher, source, and/or sponsor?
- What are the author's credentials or organizational affiliations?
- Is the author qualified to write on the topic?
- Is there contact information, such as a publisher or email address?
- Does the URL reveal anything about the author or source?

# **Accuracy: can we trust the information?**

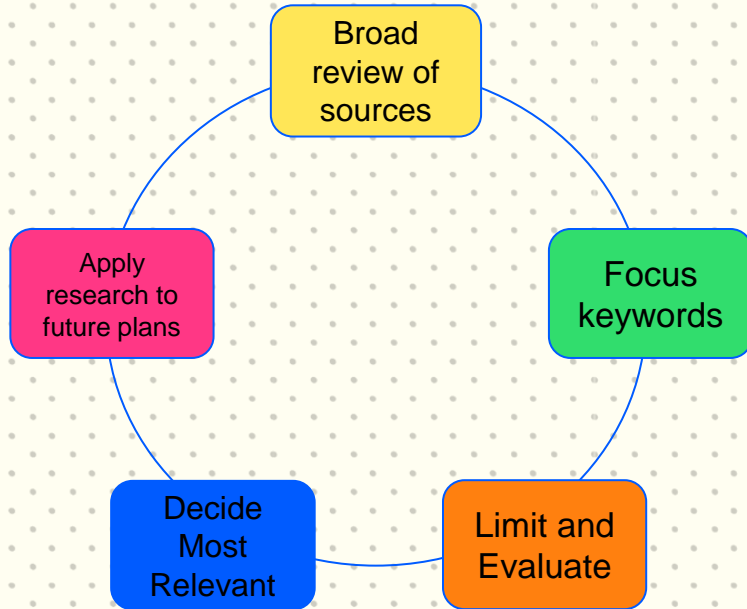
- Where does the information come from?
- Is the information supported by evidence?
- Has the information been reviewed or refereed?
- Can you verify any of the information in another source or from personal knowledge?
- Does the language or tone seem unbiased and free of emotion?
- Are there spelling, grammar, or typographical errors?



## **Purpose: why does this information exist?**

- What is the purpose of the information? Is it to inform, teach, sell, entertain, persuade?
- Do the authors or sponsors make their intentions or purpose clear?
- Is the information fact, opinion, or propaganda?
- Does the point of view appear objective and impartial?
- Are there political, ideological, cultural, religious, institutional, or personal biases?

# College-level Research



- Start broad
- Focus with keywords
- Limit and evaluate
- Determine relevance to your research question
- Use research to inform HIA project development

# LibGuide at Horry-Georgetown



LIBRARY

[HGTC Library](#) / [LibGuides](#) / [Phi Theta Kappa \(Regional\)](#) / [Tutorials](#)

<https://libguides.hgtc.edu/ptkcarolinas/tutorials>

**Use this from libguides at HGTC.edu**

## Information Search Worksheet

### 1. Your Research Topic

What are the key words or phrases in your research topic?

Write your topic here: \_\_\_\_\_

*Circle the important words or phrases above and cross out the other words.*

*Avoid circling vague or non-descriptive words like the, it, in, used, at, etc.*

Write the circled words in the first column in the box below.

# Demo of keyword search → limiting

Technical colleges should offer intramural sports.


# Checking news sources

[adfontesmedia.com](http://adfontesmedia.com)



ad fontes media  
 Fact Reporting  
 Mostly Analysis OR Mix of Fact Reporting and Analysis  
 Analysis OR High Variation in Reliability  
 Opinion OR High Variation in Reliability  
 Selective, Incomplete, Unfair Persuasion, Propaganda, or Other Issues  
 Contains Misleading Info  
 Contains Inaccurate/Fabricated Info

