Why do I need to evaluate my sources?

When completing your academic work, your tutors, assessment briefs and marking criteria will tell you that it is important to draw on a broad range of information sources to support your work and demonstrate evidence of wide reading on your subject.

However, it is essential to remember that the academic quality of the sources you use is more important than the quantity. If you are using information as evidence to support your arguments, it is essential that this information is coming from a credible source, is relevant to your work and is itself backed-up by evidence.

Fighting fake news and unreliable sources

The importance of evaluating information in academic work has parallels with the current debate around tackling fake news. If we want to make informed decisions in our lives, whether it is who to vote for, or which broadband provider to choose, we need to be able to trust the information sources that we rely on and be equipped to identify dubious information.

Similarly, if you want to make strong, evidence-based arguments in your academic work, you need to have confidence that the sources you use on are of an appropriate academic standard.

We hope that this tutorial will give you the tools you need to confidently and critically evaluate the information sources that you use in your work.