**Literacy Skills Needed for Effective Research:**

**1. Evaluating Sources for Reliability and Usefulness**

Evaluating resources for reliability and usefulness is vital to ensure that the information you are gathering to help you form an opinion or make a decision is worthy of your consideration, and that it is going to lead you to **a well-founded and defensible conclusion.**

All good and trustworthy decisions are based on reliable, useful information. Imagine if the New Zealand government made the decision not to inoculate all new- born babies against a particular disease (such as whooping cough), based on unreliable, useless information such as research that had been found to be falsified. Perhaps the decision was based a rumour that spread through social media, an out-of-date medical journal and a You Tube clip made by amateurs with no medical qualifications. How outrageous would that be? We might then find out (too late for all those babies) through reliable, useful research, that the death rate from lack of inoculation was far higher than that for new- borns with inoculation, and all of those babies not inoculated would now have a significantly shortened life span.

Evaluating Sources by asking some of the following questions

Title of source: Author(s)

URL:   
 ***C*urrent resource?**   
When was the information gathered?

When was it posted/written?

When was it last revised?

Are links functional and up-to-date? (in online resources)

Is there evidence of newly added information or links?  
***R*elevance/Coverage**   
What is the depth and breadth of the information presented?

Is the information available elsewhere, in print or electronic format which can support the initial article?

Who is the intended audience?

Does the site/text provide the information you need?

***A*uthority ?Authenticity?**  
Who is the author/creator/sponsor and are the author's credentials listed?

Is the author a teacher or student of the topic?

Does the author have a reputation?

Is there contact information, such as an e-mail/other address?

Has the author published other works in traditional/other formats?

Is the author affiliated with an organization?

Does this organization appear to support or sponsor the page?

What does the domain name/URL reveal about the source of the information, if anything? Example: .com .edu .gov .org .net  
***A*ccuracy**   
Where does the information come from?

Are the original sources of information listed?

Can you verify any of the information in independent sources or from your own knowledge?

Has the information been reviewed or refereed?

Does the language or tone seem biased?

Are there spelling, grammar, or other typos?  
***P*urpose**   
Are possible biases clearly stated?

Is advertising content vs. informational content easily distinguishable?

Are editorials clearly labeled?

Is the purpose of the page stated?

Is the purpose to: inform? Teach? Entertain? Enlighten? Sell? Persuade?

What does the domain name/URL reveal about the source of the information, if anything? Example: .com .edu .gov .org .net