HOW TO EVALUATE JOURNAL ARTICLES

To evaluate a journal article look for:

**Purpose of Article:** Why was the article written?

- **Influence** the reader to do something? e.g. Marketing or selling a product, attend an event.
- **Informative**: e.g. results of a study/experiment, what happened at an event
- **Support** an argument: e.g. prove a method or study.

**Type of Journal**
- **Scholarly Journals**: contain articles describing high quality research and peer reviewed articles
- **Trade magazines**: specialises to a specific industry, type of trade
- **Popular magazines**: such as Newsweek, should be not used in academic assignments

**Bias** (of the publisher or author):
- Left / Right wing
- An alternative press
- Published by a political action group or organisation?

**Date of Article**:
- up-to-date
- out-of-date, or
- Timeless

Some topics, such as those in law require current information. Other subjects, such as geology, value older material as well as current.

**Bibliography**: is there a bibliography? What sources have they used?

**Usefulness**: Is the article relevant to the current research project? Is this article useful to me? Does it:
- support an argument
- disprove an argument
- give examples (survey results, primary research findings, case studies, incidents)

**Authority**: Is the author an expert in this field? Where is the author employed? What else has he/she written?

**Coverage**: Does the article cover the topic comprehensively, partially, or is it an overview?
**Audience:** For what type of reader is the author writing?

- General readers
- Students (high school, college, graduate)
- Specialists or professionals
- Researchers or academics

**Illustrations:** Are charts, graphs, maps, photographs, etc., Are the illustrations relevant? Are they clear and professional?