

# STF Guide to News Media Literacy

To learn how to set up Google alerts, see [this guide](#).

Today, there are so many different sources of information that it can be difficult to sort through and identify credible sources. With biases becoming harder to identify, being able to sort through news articles and separate fact from opinion is becoming more important than ever. Strong news literacy will undoubtedly benefit you throughout high school and college.

## ***Basic Steps for Evaluating Source Credibility***

1. Read beyond the story; evaluate the news outlet itself:
  - a. Click away from the story and investigate the website. As someone who grew up using technology, trust your gut. Does the site look sketchy and sloppily put together? If it looks questionable, it likely is.
  - b. Google the source: “Is [Source Name] a credible news source?”
2. Identify if the piece is an editorial/opinion piece:
  - a. News sources will often publish opinion pieces (known as editorials or op-eds) which share the specific views of the author, rather than unbiased, objective reporting.
  - b. News articles will be published under a specific category; opinions will be in their own separate category and will be classified as such on the web page.
    - i. If there is no way to identify whether the piece is an opinion, that’s a good sign that the source may not be trustworthy.
    - ii. Opinion pieces often have author bios at the top or bottom of the article on credible news source websites.
3. Check on the author:
  - a. A strong source should have the author(s) listed. Often, you can click on the author’s name for a bio and other stories they’ve written.
    - i. Have they published articles on similar topics in the past? If so, they are likely more knowledgeable on the topic than someone who has never written on it before.
  - b. Google the author’s name for more information on their credentials and history.
4. Determine if the sources support the story:
  - a. Notice all the hyperlinks in the story? Click through those links and look at what type of evidence the story is using to support its reporting.
  - b. Are they linking to high-quality external sources (not simply to other articles that same news outlet has published)? Can you find the information that they pulled in that external source?
5. If after checking all these things you are still unsure about a site’s credibility, you can use a fact-checking site or media bias checker:
  - a. <https://mediabiasfactcheck.com/>: Enter the name of your news source in the search bar. This site will give you information on the accuracy of the source’s factual reporting as well as any political biases it may have.
  - b. [The Factual’s Media Bias and Credibility Chart](#): This site provides data on different sources’ political leanings and overall accuracy, presented in different data formats.
6. You can also always reach out to your STF Team Member! They’ll be able to walk you through evaluating your source.