

Look at the article for a school magazine and do the exercises to improve your writing skills.

Preparation

Match the vocabulary with the correct definition and write a–h next to the numbers 1–8.

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| 1..... a purpose | a. to look at and evaluate |
| 2..... a URL | b. correct and without mistakes |
| 3..... reliable | c. an aim of doing or creating something |
| 4..... accurate | d. the experience and achievements that a person has for a particular job |
| 5..... credentials | e. to have the necessary skills, knowledge or experience to do a particular job |
| 6..... to be qualified | f. trusted to do what is expected |
| 7..... to check out | g. the technical name for a website's address. It stands for 'Uniform Resource Locator' |
| 8..... to weigh something up | h. to think carefully about different viewpoints before you make a decision |

Checking out websites



Nowadays, students often use the internet for school work or homework. If we need information for an essay or project, we can find it online quickly and easily.

However, there are millions of websites. Some of them have accurate information, but some do not. This is why we should evaluate a website before we accept what it is telling us.

Imagine you have found an article that seems useful. Here are some tips to help you evaluate it.

- **First**, check the URL. It may tell you something about the website, its creator, its purpose and its country of origin.
- **Then**, think about the purpose of the writing. Is it to inform you or to teach you, or is it to promote something to you? For example, if the article is telling you all about a famous politician and how important and amazing they are, be careful. Its real purpose may be to make you vote for them, so the information in it may not be objective.
- **Next**, check the writer's credentials. Look for a link to their 'About me' page so you can read more about their education and experience. Is he or she a professional in this area? Do you think this person is qualified to write about the subject?
- **After that**, check to see whether any information has been taken from another website. If it has, go to the original source to check that the information hasn't been changed.
- **Also**, look at the date of publication. Old articles can be unreliable because they miss out the latest evidence, or because the situation has recently changed.
- **Finally**, weigh everything up and decide if you trust the information.

Unfortunately, there is no way to be 100% sure that a site is trustworthy, so you need to consider all these factors and then decide whether you trust it. If you publish your own writing on a blog or website, some of these tips may help improve your own writing too. Give links and references to your information sources, and mention your own credentials and experience.

Top Tips for writing

1. Use a catchy title to get people interested.
2. Start by introducing the topic. Give some background information.
3. Then, explain the possible problem.
4. Use link words to give information step by step. Use bullet points to present the steps clearly or, alternatively, write them in a paragraph.

1. Check your understanding: reordering

Write a number (1–5) to put these instructions in order.

- | | |
|-------|---|
| | After all this, check the date of the source. |
| | First, check the URL to find out who published the information. |
| | Next, decide whether you think this person is qualified to write about the subject. |
| | Finally, decide whether the source is reliable. |
| | Then, check the 'About me' page to find out more about who wrote the article. |

2. Check your writing: multiple choice

Circle the best title for each article.

- An article arguing that students get too much homework
 - Five reasons why homework is good for you
 - Too much homework, too little time
 - Homework: pros and cons
- An article about using mobile phones while studying
 - Smartphones will change the world
 - How to avoid getting addicted to your smartphone
 - Smartphones ... smarter students?
- An article giving advice about how to choose your university course
 - Choosing the right course
 - A day in the life of a university student
 - Never give up!
- An article containing tips for dealing with exam stress
 - The effects of stress on our health
 - What is stress?
 - Six easy ways to beat exam stress
- An article about the various effects of energy drinks on students
 - The rise in popularity of energy drinks worldwide
 - Energy drinks for studying: good or bad idea?
 - Energy drinks: what's in them?

3. Check your writing: gap fill

Complete the sentences with a word or phrase from the box.

As long as

Try

Then

Finally

However

Whether

First

So

¹ _____ you're making notes in your history lesson or keeping track of your geography research, taking good notes is a really important skill.

Many students use laptops to write notes. ² _____, research shows that typing your notes is not necessarily the best way to learn. Students who write their notes by hand remember more and have a deeper understanding of the subject.

³ _____, what's the best way to write notes on paper? Here are a few tips to help you:

- ⁴ _____, make sure you're prepared with your books and pencil case. Keep all your notes for the same subject in the same notebook.
- ⁵ _____, when the class starts, be ready to write down the new or important information.
- ⁶ _____ to listen actively. Thinking and asking questions is more important than writing down every word.
- ⁷ _____, review your notes as soon as possible after the class.

⁸ _____ you're prepared and you think carefully as you're writing, you will find that your note-taking really helps you learn effectively.

Discussion

What do your teachers say about using the internet for research?