

# Study Skills for Sixth Form

at Newcastle University Library

[Home](#) » [Evaluating sources](#) » Positives and negatives

## Positives and negatives

### Considering the pros and cons of your sources

Study the table below to find out the pros and cons of the resources available to you.

Once you have an understanding of these, test your knowledge by completing the [diamond rank](#) and [mind map](#) exercises or challenge others with the [High Score Wins](#) card game.



Resource	Positive	Negative
Academic books	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reliable</li> <li>▪ Published</li> <li>▪ Accessible</li> <li>▪ Often written by experts</li> <li>▪ Less likely to be biased</li> <li>▪ Informative</li> <li>▪ Provides references to inform your research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Time consuming</li> <li>▪ Can be outdated</li> <li>▪ More difficult to access than some other resources</li> <li>▪ Self-published books may be less reliable</li> </ul>
Documentaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Easy to access</li> <li>▪ Informative</li> <li>▪ Great background information</li> <li>▪ Provide lots of different resources</li> <li>▪ Factual</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hard to reference</li> <li>▪ Do not provide detailed information</li> <li>▪ Can be biased</li> <li>▪ Need to check reliability</li> </ul>
Images and cartoons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Quick</li> <li>▪ Easy to access</li> <li>▪ Informative</li> <li>▪ Representative of time and place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Can be biased</li> <li>▪ Limited in information it can convey</li> <li>▪ Need to check provenance (where it came from)</li> </ul>

Resources

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tell a story</li> <li>▪ Can be stereotypical of it's time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Need to know context</li> <li>▪ Can be manipulated</li> </ul>
Journals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Informative</li> <li>▪ Reliable</li> <li>▪ Published</li> <li>▪ Peer reviewed</li> <li>▪ Short and more accessible than books</li> <li>▪ Provides references to help inform your own research</li> <li>▪ Written by experts</li> <li>▪ Answer an academic question</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Very specific</li> <li>▪ Too scholarly</li> <li>▪ Harder to access</li> </ul>
Newspapers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Current</li> <li>▪ Easy to access</li> <li>▪ Written by experts</li> <li>▪ Informative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Biased</li> <li>▪ Limited information</li> <li>▪ Sensationalist</li> <li>▪ Not reliable as too current</li> </ul>
Websites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Easy to access</li> <li>▪ Easy to search/navigate</li> <li>▪ Informative</li> <li>▪ Easy to reference</li> <li>▪ Dedicated reliable, academic websites</li> <li>▪ Current</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Need to question reliability</li> <li>▪ Anyone can create website</li> <li>▪ Fake/hoax websites</li> <li>▪ No review process on most websites</li> <li>▪ Check domain of website for who has created and why</li> <li>▪ Can change every day</li> </ul>
Wikipedia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Quick</li> <li>▪ Easy to use</li> <li>▪ Current</li> <li>▪ Good starting point</li> <li>▪ Utilise references to inform own research</li> <li>▪ Easy to access</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Anyone can contribute and edit articles</li> <li>▪ It has no formal editors or peer review process</li> <li>▪ Constantly changing</li> <li>▪ Potentially very biased</li> <li>▪ Articles are not translated between languages</li> </ul>
YouTube	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Easy to navigate</li> <li>▪ Easily digestible information</li> <li>▪ Informative</li> <li>▪ Current</li> <li>▪ Multi-media</li> <li>▪ Can be created by experts, universities, etc.</li> <li>▪ Some references given</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Very broad ranging</li> <li>▪ Need to check origin/reliability</li> <li>▪ Limited information</li> </ul>