

Can I Trust This Source?

A Science Media Literacy Checklist | Science Friday Educate | sciencefriday.com

Source being evaluated: _____ Date: _____

For each marker below, answer the question and write your observations.
Use your notes to decide: Is this a source you can trust?

1	<p>Relevant Expertise</p> <p>Does the author, or the sources they cite, have actual credentials in this specific field, not just general fame or expertise in a different area?</p> <p><i>Look for: job title, institutional affiliation, peer-reviewed publications in this specific field</i></p> <p>My notes:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
2	<p>Transparent Sourcing</p> <p>Can you trace the claims back to named experts, published research, or established institutions?</p> <p><i>Look for: linked studies, named scientists, institutional reports — not just vague phrases like "experts say"</i></p> <p>My notes:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
3	<p>No Conflict of Interest</p> <p>Does the outlet or author have a financial, political, or ideological reason to distort what they are reporting?</p> <p><i>Ask: Who funds this? Who benefits if you believe this? Is there a disclosure statement?</i></p> <p>My notes:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

4	<p>Reflects Scientific Consensus</p> <p>Does this reporting reflect the weight of expert opinion, or is it amplifying a minority or outlier view?</p> <p><i>Ask: What do major scientific institutions say? Is disagreement among credentialed experts, or between experts and non-experts?</i></p> <p>My notes:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
5	<p>Accountability and Correction</p> <p>Does this source have a track record of correcting errors publicly when they occur?</p> <p><i>Check: Does the outlet have a visible corrections policy? Have they issued corrections before?</i></p> <p>My notes:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
6	<p>Grounded in Peer-Reviewed Research</p> <p>Is the reporting anchored in published research that has been reviewed and scrutinized by other experts in the field?</p> <p><i>Look for: journal citations, links to specific studies, or reference to the peer review process</i></p> <p>My notes:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

My verdict on this source: *(check one)*

<input type="checkbox"/> Mostly trustworthy	<input type="checkbox"/> Needs more checking	<input type="checkbox"/> Proceed with caution
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Reasoning:
