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**CLAIM:**

- ✓ What is your source saying?
- ✓ Is it **timely** and **relevant** to your particular question or thesis?
- ✓ Is the claim reasonable or is it biased or unintelligible?

[Note: If the source is overtly biased or totally unintelligible, you may have to reconsider using it to support your paper or thesis.]

**ROLE OF CLAIMANT:**

- ✓ Who is the author and can the author's **credibility** be established?
- ✓ After considering how the claim was presented, is there any reason to suspect **bias** on the part of the author (political, religious, philosophical, cultural, or monetary)?

[Note: If you suspect bias or lack of credibility, this does not automatically invalidate the information. Rather, it means that you will have to place more emphasis on the other steps of CRITIC before you can make a decision on this source.]

**INFORMATION BACKING THE CLAIM:**

- ✓ Does your source present verifiable information that backs their claim?
- ✓ If original research, does the source explain how the data was gathered?
- ✓ If the source is an article, does it cite references and are they credible?
- ✓ If the source is a journal, is the journal peer reviewed?

[Note: Remember the skeptic's rule—**extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence.**]

**TESTING:**

- ✓ Can you think of a way to test the author's claim?

[Note: It may not always be possible or practical for you to conduct a detailed analysis of the information or to carry out actual testing. If this happens to be the case, can you devise a possible way to test the claim? Remember—if a claim cannot be tested, then the claim should not be treated seriously.]

**INDEPENDENT VERIFICATION:**

- ✓ Is the author an expert who is basing opinions on detailed analysis and testing or is the author just presenting opinions with little or no evidence?
- ✓ What do other **experts** have to say about the author's claim?

[Note: If you find that numerous experts confirm the original claim, then it is "probably" true. If numerous experts dispute the original claim, then it is "probably" false. If you find that the experts do not agree, then the claim your source is making is, at best, inconclusive.]

**CONCLUSION:**

- ✓ Is this source credible, taking into account the first five steps of CRITIC that apply to your source (book, periodical, or web)?
- ✓ Should this source be used in your paper or report considering your particular question or thesis?

[Note: Not all information sources can be examined using each of the five steps of CRITIC. If this is the case, you should then consider the steps that do apply to your particular source. Despite your best application of CRITIC, you should always be prepared for undiscovered information that may later invalidate your source.]

Adapted by Aileen Maddox from materials by librarians Jonathan Helmke and Brad Matthies of Butler University. CRITIC Acronym adapted from: Bartz, Wayne R. "Teaching Skepticism via the CRITIC Acronym and the Skeptical Inquirer." The Skeptical Inquirer 26.5 (2002): 42-44.