



MODULE 2

2.3 CHECKING SOURCES THROUGH CRITICAL THINKING

When you find material, you need to understand whether and how to use it in the classroom. Information you find online is not always reliable. In fact, anyone can upload content on the Internet, so some information may be of poor quality.

Consequently, it is important to use **critical thinking** to evaluate and choose your materials. To choose your materials, the best thing to do is to **verify the source**. How do you verify the source? Let us imagine that you are researching the possibility that classical music makes children smarter. Surely, you will find a lot of information online on this very topic. Let's see how to select the most reliable one.

- Be careful **where you find this information**: the website of a scientific journal will certainly be more reliable than the website of a newspaper.
- **Assess the competence of the author**: a paediatrician with a specialisation in neurology will be more reliable than a simple journalist.
- **Be careful about the author's objectives**: does he/she simply want to spread information or does he/she have other objectives such as selling a product or becoming famous? This is very important because the information could be influenced by ulterior motives.
- **Check the date of publication**: a more recent source may be more accurate and contain recent findings.

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In practice, if you use content you find online, you have to put it in inverted commas ('...') and **cite the author**. For example, if you quote a book, you must list the author's first and last name, the year the book was published, the title of the book, the place and the publisher. If you are paraphrasing someone else's content, you do not have to put it in inverted commas, but you still have to cite the source.

For images, it is a bit different because **you can only use images with free usage rights**. For example, images from [pixabay](https://pixabay.com) or unsplash.com are copyright-free.

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Does this mean that you cannot use copyrighted content when teaching? No! In fact, you can use copyrighted content in the classroom, but remember that you cannot distribute it and always cite your sources.

