

# How to determine if the author is an expert

You've read the article and now you are wondering; is the author qualified to write authoritatively and accurately on this topic?

Does the author cite any resources used to back up any claims in their writing? This is absolutely necessary for any article that presents more than common knowledge or a first person account. Are the author's credentials listed at the conclusion or introduction of the article? In professional and scholarly journals this should be present.

If none of the above information is readily available, you will need to research to find out the author's qualifications. Use the following questions to aid that search.

- Is the author's experience and education related to this topic? Try to determine their academic background (degrees) and their work experience. Are they an expert or at least knowledgeable about the subject they are writing about?
- Is this author well known in this field of study? See if you can determine how many other articles and books have been published by this author. As part of that process, how many of those writings have been critically examined by other experts? Can you find any of this critical analysis?

The following resources are places where you might find the above information.

Search an author's name on the EBSCOhost computerized magazine index to identify articles written by them.

It is also possible to search specialized periodical indexes in this manner, using an index that focuses on that subject area, e.g. Social Sciences Index for a Sociologist.

It is possible to find information about authors by searching on the Internet. Search your author's name as a subject and try a variety of engines or indexes. The highest quality information will most likely be at a site with an edu, org or gov domain. Beware of "personal" (either the author or a fan) web pages which may contain inaccurate information. Online resumes are ok though.

Look up the author in a biographical reference such as Who's Who..., Biography Index, Current Biography. Depending upon the subject area focus of an author's expertise, they might appear in a reference work dedicated to that subject area, e.g. Encyclopedia of Sociology, Who's Who in Math and Science.