### **GUIDELINES FOR IDENTIFYING MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES AND MARGINALIZED VOICES**

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### **ASK YOURSELF: Is this source SMART?**

The SMART Check is particularly helpful when evaluating news stories. Determine if your news source is SMART before believing what is reported.

**Source: Who or what is the source?**

* Where does the story come from?
  + For example, is it a news company, a nonprofit organization, an educational institution, a government agency, etc.?
* Is it current enough for your needs?
* Is it a reputable outlet?
  + Check if the source has a transparent and accessible process for addressing complaints.
* If the source is unclear? Be skeptical about the story.

**Motive: Why do they say so?**

* Do they have a special interest or particular point of view that may cause them to slant information to suit their beliefs or causes?
  + Check if the source clearly discloses its affiliations, financial support, and any conflicts of interest that might influence its reporting.
  + Biased sources can be accurate, but you must check them carefully.
* Does this represent a marginalized group?

**Authority: Who wrote the story?**

* What are the author's credentials?
* Is the person reporting the story as an eyewitness or are they interviewing an eyewitness?
  + Remember eyewitnesses can be wrong.
* Be wary of any source that seems to use hearsay, rumors, sensational headlines, exaggerated claims, or clickbait tactics to attract attention.
* Make sure it's a source you can trust - e.g. an expert on the subject, a journalist reporting for a [news outlet with a code of ethics](http://guides.lib.uw.edu/research/commstudies/ethics), etc.

**Review: Go over the story carefully**.

* Does it make sense?
* Is it logically consistent?
* Are there any notable errors in facts or conclusions?
* Make a list of questionable facts. Develop questions about the story.

**Two-source Test: Double-check everything if possible.**

* Talk to others or tune in to other newscasts to see if they are also reporting the same story.
* Research the subject in journal articles and newspapers, by interviewing others, and search online.
* Does your two-source test confirm or contradict the story?

Adapted from: <https://guides.lib.uw.edu/research/evaluate/smart>