

Use the following checklist once you have decided to select a magazine (table 1). This easy-to-use checklist has been compiled based on the Skill Sheet C4. As you gain more experience using these observation categories, the lists will become easy to manage. If you are less experienced (or less clear about your own research aims) going through the lists will take more time, but is equally worthwhile. Checking thoroughly, once, to ascertain the usefulness of a text or magazine will save you considerable time during the course of your research project. The number of texts that you *begin* to read will be *substantially lower*.

Table C.4 quick scan for selecting a newspaper or a magazine (☉C4)

Category	Observation	Consequence
Colophon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Editorial policy and aims? ○ What is the status of the board of advisors? ○ Do you know who owns the paper? Are the editors independent? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If you do not agree with the editorial policy: do not select this source. Only read it if it is an influential opinion-leader. But be even more critical than 'usual'
Selection of writers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are the authors anonymous? ○ Referee procedure: double blind (article and referee are both anonymous); how many referees per article? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Anonymously written articles should always be dealt with cautiously. Their sources should be checked; ○ Preferably, look for magazines with 'double blind' referee procedures, but do not automatically ignore other sources
Titles and leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tendentious titles? ○ What about the photograph/article ratio? ○ What kind of argument is preferred by the editors: opinion articles, articles in a scientific debate, general interest? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The simpler the policy, the weaker the sources, the more argumentative the source, the more illustrations predominate argumentation, the more you should look for other sources (as well)
Nature of sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The nature of press agencies most often used? ○ Does the newspaper do much independent research: nature of journalists; look at the source of the tables and figures; ○ The nature of the sources used in the articles: how many references, what about the bibliography; look at the tables and illustrations used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Check whether the newspaper or the press agency is generally knowledgeable about the topic or region discussed; ○ If the investigative reputation of the journalist is high, this is a good source for regular information; ○ If the selection of sources looks solid, this magazine should be consulted regularly on specific topics
Nature of argumentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can you tell whether the magazine has a 'house style' for argumentation (see The Economist)? ○ Do the authors apply the rules of argumentation (☉B8, D8, D9)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If you do not like the house style: ask yourself whether this is an indication that the source is less reliable. If this is the case read with care, and do not quote without first checking the information
Nature of topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Confront the topics covered regularly by the paper and your own research topics. Look in the colophon to ascertain if the magazine has clear goals regarding particular topics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If each publication has at least two good and relevant articles, this is a magazine that should be considered for subscription