**What is Peer Review?**

What's the deal with peer-review? Why do professors care so much about it? What's wrong with just using the information from Google?

Well, you may not know this, but your instructors are up to a lot more than just teaching. In fact, they're also doing research so they can create new knowledge about all sorts of cool things.

Most of this new knowledge is tracked through the production of articles published in scholarly, peer-reviewed journals. These articles can be about an idea, a study, or an experiment. The articles in these journals are different from ones published in magazines, or on websites, because they are reviewed by experts in a particular field.

Once an author submits a copy of their work—their manuscript—to a journal, it will be judged on whether it's worth publishing.

Things that will be considered will be things like: Does the content of the manuscript align with the journal's scope, values, and mission? Does it follow proper citation guidelines and other rules for submission?

If the article fits the journal it will get passed on to several other scholars –or "peers"—studying in similar areas.

These peers will evaluate the manuscript: Are there omissions, errors, or biases; is the methodology appropriate; is the writing sound; are the conclusions valid? Because these scholars are experts in their field they'll know whether the information presented is worthy of study.

If the reviewers think that something should be changed, elaborated, or removed, they'll send their comments back to the author for revision. Sometimes the manuscript will bounce between the author and the reviewers many, many times. This rigorous process is why peer-reviewed articles are the gold standard for most academic research.

So next time your instructor tells you to find peer-reviewed sources you'll know why: The information is new, important, and scholarly.

If you're having trouble locating peer-reviewed sources, or understanding their characteristics, help is always available in person and online!