The source log

Keep every research claim tied to a source you've opened: the claim, where it came from, the exact wording and how sure you are.

Time **about 20 minutes** Updated **12 Nov 2026** Fill in online at **Learn › Worksheets**

HOW TO USE IT

1. Write your question first, so you only collect what helps answer it.
2. Log each claim you'd use, with a source you've opened and read yourself.
3. If a source reports someone else's work, trace it to the original and log that too.

1. The question

What I need to know, and why

What would change my mind

2. Claims and sources

One row per claim. Confidence: High (original source, read in full), Medium (reliable secondary source), Low (couldn't trace).

Source log

	Claim	Source (and original, if different)	Exact wording	Confidence
Claim 1				
Claim 2				
Claim 3				
Claim 4				

3. Trace check

Before I use these claims

- [ ] I've opened every source myself, not just the AI's summary of it
- [ ] Every claim that came from a summary or news story is traced to its original
- [ ] The wording I'd use doesn't say more than the source does
- [ ] Claims I couldn't trace are marked Low or dropped

My answer, in two sentences

Example answers

> The example uses the real trace from the lesson, checked on 11 November 2026 against the Columbia Journalism Review report.

1. The question

What I need to know, and why

> How often do AI search tools cite news sources correctly? For a slide on whether our team should trust AI citations.

What would change my mind

> A large, recent study showing high citation accuracy.

2. Claims and sources

One row per claim. Confidence: High (original source, read in full), Medium (reliable secondary source), Low (couldn't trace).

Source log

	Claim	Source (and original, if different)	Exact wording	Confidence
Claim 1	AI search tools often misidentify news sources	CJR Tow Center, 6 Mar 2025 (original)	"incorrect answers to more than 60 percent of queries"	High
Claim 2	The test covered 8 tools	Same CJR report	"twenty publishers times ten articles times eight chatbots"	High
Claim 3				
Claim 4				

3. Trace check

Before I use these claims

- [x] I've opened every source myself, not just the AI's summary of it
- [x] Every claim that came from a summary or news story is traced to its original
- [x] The wording I'd use doesn't say more than the source does
- [x] Claims I couldn't trace are marked Low or dropped

My answer, in two sentences

> In a 2025 test of eight AI search tools, the tools collectively misidentified the source of news excerpts in more than 60% of 1,600 queries. That's strong reason to check AI citations, though it measured news citation only.

AI can help you find and read sources. It can't be the source. Anything you'd put your name to should trace to something you've opened yourself. Free to use and adapt for your own work.