Evaluating Statistics

**PRIMARY SOURCES: RAW DATA, STATISTICS**
- What organization is providing the data?
  - Are they a reliable source of information on this topic?
  - Do they have a particular bias?
- What methodology did they use?
  - What definitions do they use?
  - What are the limitations of the data?
  - Are there variables that weren’t considered?
- How current is the data?

**SECONDARY SOURCES: REPORTING AND/OR INTERPRETING DATA/STATISTICS**
- What organization published the data?
  - Are they considered reliable?
  - Do they have a particular bias?
- Is there an individual author?
  - What makes them an expert?
  - Do they have a particular bias?
- When was the article published?
- Is the article trying to inform you of facts or persuade you of an opinion?
- What data does the author chose to include and exclude?
- How is the data framed?
  - numbers versus percentage, visuals, word choice
- Are there any logical flaws?
- Are the sources for the data cited?
  - Evaluate the primary sources.

**COMPARING DATA**
- Does all the data use the same standards/rules?
  - Is all the data from the same time period?
  - Are the methodologies (definitions, variables, etc.) the same?
  - Is the framing of the data the same?
  - Is necessary context given?

**NEED MORE HELP?**
Contact Us: Visit us at the reference desk!  
Email: library@stephens.edu  
Call: (573) 876-7182  
Text: (573) 475-4211  
Chat with us online at http://stephens.edu/library

If you have a question for me:
Jennifer Gravley, Research & Instruction Librarian  
jgravley@stephens.edu (573) 441-5129