EVALUATING SOURCES

Books

Are author credentials provided; for example, is the author a professor, a journalist, someone with experience in the field? (See inside back cover for a hardcover book or the back cover for a paperback.)

Check the date for currency. Is this important for your topic?

Is the publisher a university press? A large well-known company? A special interest group?

Who is the intended audience? (Determine the level of language: easy? general adult? scholarly?)

Is there an index? A list of references/bibliography? How descriptive is the table of contents?

What is the purpose of the book: to inform? persuade? entertain?

Does the book exhibit a bias? Does it present different points of view?

Articles

Is the author identified? Are credentials listed? (Look at end of article or bottom of the first page.)

Check the date for currency. Is this important for your topic?

Look at the length of the article. Is it long enough to provide sufficient content?

Who is the intended audience? (Determine the level of language: easy? general adult? scholarly?)

Does the article contain a list of references at the end?

What is the purpose of the article: to inform? persuade? entertain?

What type of publication is it: scholarly? professional? general interest? news magazine?

Does the publication that the article is in have a bias? Does it present different points of view?

Does the article appear in a peer-reviewed/scholarly/scientific/professional journal?

Web Sites

Who is the author? Are qualifications or credentials listed? Is contact information provided?

Check the date for currency. Is the information still up-to-date? Are links on the site still working?

Is the information accurate? (Compare to other sources.) Are sources cited?

What is the purpose of the site: to inform? to sell a product or service? to persuade? to entertain?

Is the information biased? Does it present different points of view?

Who is the intended audience? (Determine the level of language: easy? general adult? scholarly?)

Check the domain: .edu – institution of higher education, .org – organization, .gov – government agency or department, .com – business, .net – network

.edu and .gov – considered reliable; .org – may be credible, but biased.