**Evaluating Websites**

A Web Quest for 9th Grade

Designed by

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**Introduction**

In the 21st century, we are bombarded with an overwhelming amount of material. We need the skills to sort through this information to find what is valuable and discard the rest. How can we sort through all the things we find? How do we know what is valuable and what isn’t? Ultimately, how do we make sure that false information doesn’t make a fool out of us?

**The Task**

In order to use information correctly, and to make sure the information we use is valid we need to understand how to evaluate every part of a website. In order to do this you will:

* Identify the author and evaluate the author’s credentials
* Identify bias and incomplete information in a website.
* Identify the purpose of the website
* Analyze facts to decide if they are true and complete
* And ultimately, evaluate websites for usefulness

**Standards**

The objective for this Webquest is: *Students will be able to evaluate websites for accuracy, authority,* *bias, and purpose.* This Webquest addresses Minnesota State Standards for Information Literacy. It addresses the following standard: *MEMO I. Inquiry, Research, and Problem Solving: The student will learn a continuous cycle of questioning, gathering, synthesizing, evaluating, and using information individually and collaboratively to create new knowledge and apply it to real world situations. II .Gather.* *C. Evaluate the validity of information resources including source, bias, accuracy, relevance, completeness, and purpose.*

**The Process**

The class will split into groups of four. Each student will be in charge of covering one criterion for evaluating websites. The criteria are accuracy, authority, bias, and purpose. You will learn about the criteria, and fill out a [worksheet](Evaluating%20Websites%20Worksheet.docx) which asks you to define your criterion, explain why it is important, and give an example of something from a website that would make you throw out the information on the site based on the criteria, and an example that would cause a website to be credible based on the criteria.

To define your criteria visit the following sites:

* [Authority](http://www.usg.edu/galileo/skills/unit09/sources09_02.phtml)
* [Objective Reasoning](http://www.usg.edu/galileo/skills/unit09/sources09_08.phtml)
* [Evaluating Web Sources](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GRIW1EhUDSk&p=C941C4D3DEF654B7&playnext=1&index=14)
* [Evaluating Websites](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gBe4WKcQzVI&feature=related)
* [Checklist for Evaluating Websites](http://www.lib.umd.edu/guides/webcheck.html)
* [Evaluating Websites: Criteria for the Classroom](http://www.lesley.edu/library/guides/research/evaluating_web.html#purpose)
* [5 Criteria for Evaluating](http://olinuris.library.cornell.edu/ref/research/webcrit.html)
* [Evaluating Internet Information](http://www.library.jhu.edu/researchhelp/general/evaluating/)

From the above websites you should be able to define your criterion, and explain why it is important. You will then review three websites based on their criteria. You will fill out the evaluation table on your worksheet, and find examples from these websites of things that would cause a website to be untrustworthy and items that would allow it to be trusted. To practice evaluating websites you will visit and evaluate these websites about smoking:

* [American’s for Non-smokers’ Rights](http://www.no-smoke.org/)
* [Tobacco Free Initiative](http://www.who.int/tobacco/en/)
* [Tobacco Free Kids](http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/index.php)

After filling out your worksheets, share with your group the information your worksheet contains. Be sure to clearly explain what your criterion means and why it is important. Discuss what you thought about the websites. Finally, as a group, you will create a small website using your [WEEBLY](http://students.weebly.com/) account. You should design the website for third-fifth grade students. Explain the criteria for evaluating websites and why it is important to evaluate web sources. Include 2-3 questions students should ask themselves to help them evaluate the websites for each criteria. The questions can be taken from other websites, but be sure to cite your resources. At the bottom of your webpage include a short list of resources you used to create the site. These need only be links to the internet sources. After everyone has completed their websites you will present them to the class, and we will have a discussion on what you learned about website evaluation.

**Evaluation**

Students will be evaluated individually for their evaluation worksheets. Students will get a group grade for their website and works cited.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Beginning**  **1** | **Developing**  **2** | **Accomplished**  **3** | **Exemplary**  **4** | **Score** |
| ***Evaluation Worksheets*** | Not filled out. | Not filled out completely. Does not use much detail and does not use examples. | Filled out completely with some details and 1 example of an item that speaks to chosen criteria from the website. | Filled out completely with many details and at least 2 examples of items that speak to chosen criteria from the website. |  |
| ***Website*** | Incomplete and Incorrect definition for the criteria for evaluating websites. Doesn’t use questions. | Contains the correct, but incomplete definition of each criterion for evaluating websites. Doesn’t use questions. | Contains the correct definition of each criterion for evaluating websites with small mistakes. Uses 1 question for each criterion. | Contains the correct, complete definition of each criterion for evaluating websites. Uses at least 2 questions for each criterion. |  |
| ***Works Cited*** | Students do not cite any resources. | Students only cite one source. | Students cite 2 sources. | Students cite all resources they have used. |  |

**Conclusion**

By completing this Webquest, you have learned how to evaluate websites. You now know what criteria are used to evaluate sources. Does the site contain bias? Is it from a reputable source? Is it trying to sell something? Remember these important criteria while completing research assignments, and don’t be afraid to apply them to other sources as well. If you’re still not convinced of the importance of evaluating web sources visit this [website](http://www.philb.com/fakesites.htm).

**Credits & References**

Image from Microsoft Word Clipart Gallery.

MEMO Standard is taken from [MEMO Information Literacy Standards: Grades 9-12](http://api.ning.com/files/DAqo3mqzC3vRRCVSKWRTncFh4hMRdZ9BlNnJL2B-jVM_/4.StandardsRefresh912Final12.10.09.doc).

Some ideas and the tobacco websites were taken from [“A Webquest about Evaluating Web Sites”](http://www.sdst.org/shs/library/evalwebstu.html)

*Last updated on November 8, 2010. Based on a template from* [*The WebQuest Page*](http://webquest.sdsu.edu/webquest.html)