Evaluating Sources

When you read a text, start asking three questions:

- Who is the author of the text?
- Who is the intended audience for the text?
- What is the purpose of the text?

Author: When you read a text, try to find out as much about the author as you possibly can:

- Who is the author?
- What do you know about the author?
- Is he/she trustworthy? Why?
- What else has he/she written on the subject?

When you write your own papers, you will need to convince your reader about your own trustworthiness and credibility the same way that you need to satisfy your own curiosity about the author of a text you read.

Audience: There are many different types of audiences. When you read a text, it is important to know who the intended audience is. When you write a text, it is integral to know who your readers are. Identify the audience based on the following questions:

- Who is the target audience?
- What is the audience’s interest in the subject?
- What does the audience know about the subject?
- How would the audience feel about the subject?

Purpose: When reading, think of the specific purpose as to why the author is writing it. Writers can have numerous purposes which change from situation to situation and audience to audience. Ask yourself these questions:

- What is the writer’s purpose for writing the article?
- What specific information is the writer conveying?
- Is the writer trying to convince you of something?
- Is the writer trying to sell something?*
Evaluating Sources Activity
Use the information about evaluating sources. Rank the three sources from least credible to most credible. Write down the criteria you are using to make your decisions and be prepared to share with the class. Be specific.

1. Website One
   Rank (circle one): 1 2 3
   Least Most
   Title: 
   Author: 
   Audience: 
   Purpose: 

2. Website Two
   Rank (circle one): 1 2 3
   Least Most
   Title: 
   Author: 
   Audience: 
   Purpose: 

3. Website Three
   Rank (circle one): 1 2 3
   Least Most
   Title: 
   Author: 
   Audience: 
   Purpose: 