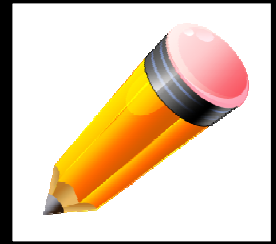


Evaluating Information

A Research & Library Skills Exercise ♦ 2009-2010
www.lib.umd.edu/UES/engl101/exercises.html



Instructors Name: _____ ENGL 101 Section: _____ Class Meeting Time: _____

Your Name: _____ Date: _____

Why evaluate information?

It is important to critically evaluate all information, no matter where you find it. Whether you are researching health information or looking into buying a car, you will want to insure the information you are relying on is credible. The same goes for information you plan on using in a research paper. In order to insure that the information you are using is relevant and accurate, you need to evaluate information by looking critically at different elements; these include: *timeliness*, *intended audience*, and *authorship*. Information found in books and articles are not exempt from evaluation, as they too have a bias.

The Exercise:

Answer the following questions in order to practice evaluating information:

Evaluating Information – Exigency

How does the exigency (particularly currency and timeliness) effect how you may go about selecting research sources? Keep this in mind as you answer these two questions:

Imagine you were writing a paper on a medical topic. Would you use information from an article about **lung transplants** published in 1999 or 2009? Or, does it matter? Why or why not?

Imagine you were writing a paper about **Egyptian pyramids**. Would you use information from a book published in 1943 or 2003? Or, does it matter? Why or why not?

Evaluating Information – Authorship

Books found within the collection of the University of Maryland Libraries, or in other libraries, are not exempt from scrutiny. The goal is to decide whether a source meets some basic requirements: *Is the book written by someone who has knowledge of this subject? Has it satisfied your requirements concerning scholarship and depth?* Keep this in mind as you answer these two questions:

To begin, go to the Libraries' Catalog: www.catalog.umd.edu.

Who is the author of the book *Arming America: the origins of a national gun culture*?

Author's name is: _____

How many copies do the Libraries own? _____ copies.

What other books has the author written that are owned by UM Libraries? Do an **author beginning with..** search in the Catalog to find out. List these other book titles here:

You might need to search **Google**, or use a database in **Research Port** that contains general news articles such as **Academic Search Premier** or **LexisNexis Academic** to find information that will help you answer these questions:

At what universities does / did he work?

Briefly, describe the controversy surrounding this book.

For more information on evaluating books and periodicals, go to:
www.lib.umd.edu/guides/evaluate_sources.html