# Website Evaluation Chart—Authoritative Sources

What features should an **authoritative** website have?

Ask yourself: Who created the site, why and when?

| Topic:  | *all of these               |               |            |                       | two or more of these |  |                       |                      |                                |                          |                                  |  |  |  |  |
|---|-----------------------------|---------------|------------|-----------------------|----------------------|--|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| feature<br>(+,-)<br>website name<br>and address | Identifiable, expert author | Clear purpose | Up-to-date | Objective information | Documented sources   | Functional links to other<br>authoritative sites | Educational site .edu | Government site .gov | Organization site or orgor.net | Little or no advertising | Anything specific to your topic? |  |  |  |  |
| 1.  |                             |               |            |                       |                      |  |                       |                      |                                |                          |                                  |  |  |  |  |
| 2.  |                             |               |            |                       |                      |  |                       |                      |                                |                          |                                  |  |  |  |  |
| 3.  |                             |               |            |                       |                      |  |                       |                      |                                |                          |                                  |  |  |  |  |
| 4.  |                             |               |            |                       |                      |  |                       |                      |                                |                          |                                  |  |  |  |  |

### How to evaluate

 Look at the URL (the address). Is it a personal site (look for ~ or % or users, members, or people)? Is it a government or school/college site (.gov or .edu)? Is it clear who publishes it—does it match the name of the site?

2. Look at the top, bottom and sides for information about when the site was created, who created it and when it was created. Is there contact information for the author? Is the author an expert in his/her field?

3. Skim over the content to look for sources, links to other sources, and evidence of bias. (Sometimes bias is ok. Fan sites can have great information, but it's important to notice there is a bias and keep it in mind as you evaluate the information you find. Perhaps you can find a site with an alternate point of view.)

## Ask yourself

#### Is this an **expert author?**

Can you find contact information? Credentials? (Note there is a difference between the author and the webmaster.) Does the author seem **objective** (unbiased)? Is he or she biased, or have a reason to be biased?

#### Does the site have a clear purpose?

Is it for teaching (educational), selling (commercial), or sharing (fan)?

#### Is the information up-to-date?

When was it last-updated? Is it current enough for what you need?

#### Is the information objective?

What opinions are expressed? How detailed is the information? Is there little or no advertising?

Are there documented sources—where did the author get the information? Are there links to other sites?

Where is this site published?

## Is there anything specific to your topic that you want to keep in mind?