Exercise in Evaluating Books and Articles

You have been given book or article to review or have found one on your own. Over the next 10 minutes use the criteria listed below to evaluate the book or article. Select one person to report your findings to the entire class. Be prepared to defend your evaluation.

**Bibliographic Information**
Author – Is the author an expert? How do you know? What makes him/her a credible person? Is it his/her education, career, education or something else? Why should we believe him/her?

Date of Publication – Was the book or article published recently? Does its age influence its usefulness to you on this topic? If so, in what way(s)?

Edition or Revision – Is it a first edition? If not, does it list the way(s) in which the content has been changed since the first edition and why it was changed? If you are reviewing an article, does the topic seem unique or is it a well known topic? Are the thoughts in the article original ideas or research, or is the article reporting on someone else’s work?

Publisher – Was it published by a company/newspaper/journal you have heard of for books or articles? Was it published by a university press? Does its place of publication bear upon your topic in any way?

**Content Information**
Purpose – Why do you think the author wrote this book or article and what was his/her intent in writing it? Was it written to set the record straight, to influence someone, or to just inform the audience?

Audience- Who was this book or article written for: a lay person? A professor?, a parent? What is the expected education level of the reader? Should the reader be familiar with graphs and methodologies or a specialized subject area?

Relevance – Does this book or article fit well with your topic? Does it make general points that can only be used for background information or does it contain detailed information about your topic? What aspects of this book or article will be useful to your paper? Why?

Scope – Is it comprehensive or narrow in its perspective? Is it limited in some way or is its coverage overly broad?

Objectivity – Do you think the author is promoting a certain way of seeing the topic? What evidence do you see of bias? Are all the facts proven or substantiated? Is it persuasive? Would you call it propaganda, or is it a work that includes both positive and negative aspects of a topic? Does he/she provide differing opinions?

Writing Quality – Is the writing clear and to the point? Is it well organized and does it flow easily or is it bumpy and disjointed? Is any information missing?