Source Evaluation Worksheet

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Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Use this worksheet to evaluate the quality and reliability of your sources.

Source Citation:

(fill in)

I. EXPLAIN HOW THIS SOURCE RELATES TO YOUR TOPIC

II. EVALUATE THE SOURCE’S RELIABILITY/AUTHOR’S EXPERTISE

As far as you can tell, does the author have scholarly or academic expertise? (circle one)

Yes Maybe/Unsure No

If the author is a scholar or academic, what discipline(s) do they work/write/have training in?

(fill in; e.g. history, political science, psychology)

If not a scholar, does the author have some other kind of reliable expertise? (circle one) Y N

What evidence or clues do you have of the author’s expertise and reliability? (check all that apply)

□ education/academic credentials

□ author has deep knowledge of the topic

□ author has published other work on the same or a related topic

□ reputation; author is referenced by other scholars

□ place/type of employment

□ source is published by an academic press, journal, or web source

□ source is published by a reputable press, journal, magazine, newspaper, or web source

□ language used is complex, specific, and/or assumes prior knowledge

□ source is based on substantial research

□ source is based on substantial, relevant observation and/or personal experience

□ if the author takes a position or makes an argument, it is based on verifiable external evidence,

not just personal opinion or abstract reasoning

□ author cites their sources of information

□ other (explain)

III. EVALUATE THE CURRENCY OF THE SOURCE.

When was the source published?

Is your topic time sensitive – does it matter if your source was published recently? (check one)

□ Yes, it’s very important

□ Yes, it’s somewhat important

□ No, it’s not very important

□ other (explain)

IV. EVALUATE THE SOURCE FOR POTENTIAL BIAS.

What was the author’s motivation or purpose for writing this piece?

(e.g. to inform? persuade? sell something? etc.)

Was the source published under the sponsorship or with the financial support of any individual(s),

organization(s), or institution(s)? (circle one) Y N

If so, who/what sponsored or supported it?

Does the author have a personal relationship to, or vested interest in, the topic? (circle one)

Y N

If so, what is it?

If the author is taking a position/making an argument, is it based solely on personal opinion or abstract

reasoning – without research, verifiable evidence, or substantial observation or experience? (circle one)

Y N

Does the author use a lot of extreme, exaggerated, overgeneralized, and/or provocative language?

(circle one) Y N

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