

Evaluating Books

Your group has been given a topic to write about and one book on that topic to review. Over the next 10 minutes use the criteria listed below to evaluate the book. 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 is his/her authority or 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 recently published? 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?
- Publisher – Was it published by a company you have heard of? 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 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?
- Relevance – Does this book fit well with your topic? Does it take a broad approach or does it contain detailed information that will be useful to your paper?
- Scope – Is it comprehensive or narrow in its perspective? Is it limited in some way?
- Objectivity – Do you think the author is promoting a certain way of seeing the topic? What evidence do you see of an obvious or subtle bias? Are all the facts proven or substantiated? Is it persuasive? Would you call it propaganda? 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?