Evaluating Sources Lesson Plan
Caroline Buff, Librarian

Learning Outcomes
Upon successful completion of this lesson, students will:
• Evaluate sources for bias, currency, accuracy, authority and usefulness

Time requirement: 50 – 75 minutes

Materials
• Online research guide for students to access during the session. Guide contains a research topic, thesis statement, and a list of links to possible sources on that topic. Sources are in a variety of formats, including online videos, websites and articles from library databases.
• Worksheet: Would you use this source for a research paper on this topic? List 5 reasons why/why not.
• Handout on evaluating sources

Demonstration (10 minutes)
• Evaluate a source together as a group. Talk about potential bias, currency, accuracy, authority and usefulness of source for the given topic. Decide as a group whether or not this is a good source for this topic.

Activity (20 minutes)
• Students work in groups of 2 or 3, depending on class size. Each group is assigned a specific source to review. Give students 20 minutes to review sources and fill out the worksheet with reasons why they would or would not use the source for the given research topic.

Assessment (20 minutes)
• Each group presents its source to the rest of the class, giving reasons why it would or would not be a good source for the given topic. The class asks questions and votes on whether or not they agree with the group’s findings. The librarian moderates the discussion, asks questions of the group and class when appropriate, and takes advantage of teachable moments.

Additional instruction (optional)
• If time is remaining after the assessment (such as in 75-minute classes) the librarian does a brief demonstration of one or two online databases, showing students how database articles are located.