Evaluating a Website

Curriculum Area(s): Reading	**Grade Level:** 10
Time Required: 2 – 50 minute sessions	**Instructional Groupings:** Pairs or small groups

Standards: RI.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. RI.9-10.6 Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.
Materials: Internet, computer (at least one access point for each pair or group of students)
Overview: To guide students in evaluating websites for accuracy, authority, objectivity, and appropriateness of use.
What will I differentiate? The closure activity
How will I differentiate? A secondary option for students who are unable to extend the activity on their own.
As a result of this lesson/unit, students will…
Understand: Can students explain why it is important to evaluate websites for accuracy, authority, objectivity, and appropriateness of use?

Know: Basic computer skills **Vocabulary:** accuracy, authority, objectivity, appropriateness of use	**Do (Skills):** Refer to specific examples from text as evidence. Infer meaning from website content.

Pre-Assessment: Students will answer the following questions: 　1.　Name some websites you are familiar with. What words describe these websites? 　2.　Can you name a website that fits into each of the following categories? 　　　• Accurate 　　　• Authoritative 　　　• Objective 　　　• Appropriate for use in school
Steps in the Lesson: 　1.　The teacher will give a short explanation of the importance of evaluating websites for accuracy, authority, objectivity, and appropriateness of use before trusting their content. Each of the terms will be defined. 　2.　Students will then be instructed to type in the URL for the Institute for Historical

Review's *Journal of Historical Review:* http://www.ihr.org/main/journal.shtml

3. Students will be evaluating the content found through this website, but before they get started, they should work as a group to develop a plan for evaluating the website. Each group should complete the first column of the attached worksheet.
4. Students should use the following search terms and the resulting URLs from the IHR in their research: *slavery, Holocaust, civil rights.* They should then use another search engine (depending on what is available) to search those same terms and also to search for information about the IHR and its journal. After putting their research plans into action, students should complete the second column on the worksheet.
5. As a large group, students should discuss their findings. The teacher should record ideas on a board or flip chart and then summarize students' thoughts, making sure to emphasize the key aspects of *accuracy, authority, objectivity,* and *appropriateness of use.* Some prompts for discussion include:
   • Is this content found on this website *accurate*?
   • What *authority* (if any) does this website have?
   • Is the content found on this website *objective*?
   • When (if ever) would it be *appropriate* to use the content on this website? Is the content appropriate for research for school papers and projects?

Differentiation: If students are unable to complete the closure activity without some prompts, provide one of the websites listed at the end of the lesson and have them repeat the lesson using that website.

Closure Activity/Wrap-up: Students should work together to find at least one website that meets the following criteria:
   • accurate, authoritative, objective, and appropriate for a school project
   • questionable accuracy
   • unsure of authority
   • may be subjective (not objective)
   • appropriate for another use (but not for a school project)

Post-Assessment: Students should write a two- to three-page essay answering the question: Why is it important to evaluate websites for accuracy, authority, objectivity, and appropriateness of use?

Additional Resources: Use this same lesson as a model for exploring content of other websites, including:
http://www.martinlutherking.org/
http://www.gatt.org
http://www.whitehousehistory.org/

Name: _____   Date: _____

Evaluating Websites: The Journal of Historical Review

Fill in the first column below before you begin exploring the website for *The Journal of Historical Review* (http://www.ihr.org/main/journal.shtml). Then complete the second column with your findings.

Categories for Evaluation	Before we begin, our plan for researching is…	After researching, our findings are…
ACCURACY		
AUTHORITY		
OBJECTIVITY		
APPROPRIATENESS OF USE		