Evaluating Sources — Books, journals, newspapers and others

AUTHORITY
1. Is it clear who wrote the material and are the author's qualifications for writing on this topic clearly stated somewhere in the source?
2. Does the author cite other sources in his/her work?
3. Is there a bibliography of citation sources?
4. Is there an index?
5. Can you locate the publisher, place of publication, date of publication.
6. If it is a journal can you find the volume, issue number, page numbers, date of publication, journal title, article title. (Most of these elements are available for a newspaper article as well)

ACCURACY
1. Are the sources for any factual information clearly listed so they can be verified in another source?
2. If there are charts and/or graphs containing statistical and/or other data, are these charts and/or graphs clearly labeled and easy to read?
3. Is the source of the data clearly identified near the information?
4. Have you been able to locate this information in more than one source?

OBJECTIVITY
1. Are both sides of an issue presented in a balanced way?
2. If using a work that has differing points of view, are the sections clearly identified?
3. If the material is focused in one direction, how biased is it?

CURRENCY
1. Do you have the date of publication of your source?
2. Does currency matter with your topic?
3. If material is presented in graphs and/or charts, is it clearly stated when the data was gathered?

COVERAGE
1. If using a journal, magazine or newspaper, do you have the whole article?
2. If using a book, when was it published? Do you need to update the information in the book or do you need to look backward in time?
3. New copyright law states that a person who writes and publishes something does not initially have to apply for copyright protection. To defend against infringement, the creator needs to apply for protection. Assume all material is covered unless something on the site indicates it is not.
4. You should look to see if you can find the name of the copyright holder? (In the case of a book it is often the author. In the case of a journal article, it is quite often the publisher.)