5W's CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING WEBSITES

WHO? (AUTHORITY / CREDIBILITY)

Who is the author or publisher?
What are the author's credentials? Are they qualified?
Can you verify this information about the author or publisher?
Is there contact information available?

WHAT? (OBJECTIVITY / RELIABILITY / PURPOSE)

What is the purpose of the site?
(Is it to sell, inform, explain, persuade, entertain, share, educate or express an opinion?)
Is the author's intention clear?
Is this page mostly fact, opinion, or propaganda?
What is the point of view (s) and does it appear objective and impartial?
Are there opinion words used such as always, best, least, worst, never, should, most, etc.?
Are there political, ideological, cultural, religious, institutional or personal biases?

WHERE? (ACCURACY / VERIFIABILITY)

Where does the information come from?
Is the information supported by evidence?
Personal, business, or a news site?
Can I verify any of the information in another source or from personal knowledge?
Are there citations, sources, references provided?
What does the domain extension tell me about the source?
Are there any spelling or grammatical errors?
Where are graphs and/or charts from and are they clearly labeled?

WHEN? (CURRENCY / DATE)

When the site was published or posted? and updated?
When has the site been updated or revised?
Do the links work?
Does your topic require the most up-to-date information?

WHY? (RELEVANCE / USEFULNESS / SCOPE)

Does the information answer your question/fulfill your information need?

Have you compared this source to other available sources to see if it is the best selection?
Would you be comfortable citing this source on a paper?
Is the site the appropriate reading level?
Why should I use this information or should I keep researching?
Is it easy to use?