

Sample Assignment Sheet for Evaluating Controversies Unit Option 2

The Rhetorical Context

You blog for an popular online magazine such as Salon or Slate in a column called “Web Buster” Each month, you describe and evaluate three websites constructed around a similar topic in order to develop an answer to these questions:

- What are these websites’ positive aspects and their limitations? To what extent, if any, are these websites ;credible treatments of their topic?

Your readers depend on your “critic’s eye” to give a thoughtful argument so that they understand how they should view these websites. They come from varied backgrounds and tend to have very different (and strong) opinions, so you want to be as persuasive as possible in your writing.

The Process

For this assignment, you will choose a topic from the list below and locate three websites to evaluate.

My topic: _____

My websites: 1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

You’ll research your websites through class activities and discussions about evaluation and you’ll locate critics’ points of view about the websites and the topic by locating and reading magazine, newspapers, and other websites as well as social media sites and podcasts, as appropriate.

You’ll evaluate your websites using the CRAP criteria: currency, reliability, authority, point of view/ purpose. (No worries - we’ll develop strategies to for that evaluation) and you’ll construct an argument using those sources. Your ability to evaluate the sources will help you write a persuasive argument. You’ll develop a draft, engage in peer review, and meet one-on-one with your instructor in order to revise effectively.

The Topics

These are samples that you can choose from. However, we’ll also do invention exercises in class to help you come up with additional ideas. Keep in mind that you should select websites that *seem* credible at first glance: don’t pick websites that are obviously unreliable.

Caveats:

1. Wikipedia is not useful as a site for your analysis although you may want to use it to get you started.

2. Your websites should all be built for the purpose of your selected topic. For example, if your topic is vaccines, you need three websites focusing on vaccines. A general health website with an article on vaccines will not work as your comparison won't be symmetrical.

- Three vloggers who focus on video gaming
- Three fan fiction sites
- Three social media sites
- Three sites for sports fans, e.g., Deadspin, SB Nation, The Undeafated
- Three Star Wars fan sites
- Three Food Bloggers
- Three YouTube channels on a similar theme
- Three websites on bullying
- Three websites on vaccines
- Three websites on autism/neurodiversity
- Three websites on how to lose weight
- Three websites on GMOs (genetically modified organisms)
- Three major media news outlets, e.g., CNN, Fox, BBC.
- Three websites on hate crimes
- Three websites on UFOs.

The Deets

Length: 1000 to 1250 words PLUS Works Cited page.

Format: Double-spaced, MLA format

Minimum number of sources: 3

Due Date for draft: _____

Due Date for final paper: _____

The Assessment

In order to receive a “B” on this assignment, students should

- Engage with the process described above in order to research and write their persuasive arguments as demonstrated by reflective writing throughout the unit
- Meet the minimum requirements as described above as demonstrated in the final paper
- Demonstrate thoughtful analysis and evaluation of sources as demonstrated in classroom written activities and in the final paper
- Synthesize sources with attention to rhetorical context as demonstrated in the final paper
- Develop a nuanced argument and conclusion as demonstrated in the final paper
- Engage in deep revision as demonstrated in changes from the first draft to the final paper

In order to receive an “A” on this assignment, students should meet the criteria described for the “B” and go above and beyond through

- Synthesis of four or more sources
- Adept and quality revision from first to last drafts

Students and instructor will together develop a weighted rubric after completion of the first draft.

The Outcomes

These represent what we expect students will be able to do by the end of the unit.

- Students will be able to analyze a range of sources and evaluate for currency, relevance, authoritativeness, and point of view/purpose
- Students will be able to explain a range of research approaches and to assess according to rhetorical contexts
- Students will be able to construct an argument with thorough and nuanced support that acknowledges the concerns of audience and synthesizes sources appropriately
- Students will be able to develop a nuanced and thoughtful conclusion based on their evaluation of relevant sources
- Students will be able to support their conclusion with ample and appropriate evidence