EVALUATING WEBSITES: AUTHORITY AND BIAS

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DIRECTIONS: Pick a controversial topic of interest to you. Find various stories written on that topic recently on a variety of sources, including sources you would not normally check. Then fill out the checklist below to assess the validity of each source. Make notes so you are prepared to discuss what you find with the class.

THE SITE
Find an About Us page for each site. Is it credible? □ Yes □ Maybe □ No
What makes you think so (or not)? Search the source on Google. Or find it on All Sides Bias (https://www.allsides.com/bias/bias-ratings), Snopes or Factcheck.org. Is the website listed there? What does it say?

THE AUTHOR/PUBLISHER
Is the author credible? □ Yes □ Maybe □ No
Is there an author for the piece you are looking at? If there is no author, who is the site’s publisher? What are their credentials? How can you tell? Does this raise any red flags?

THE SOURCES
Are the external sources used by the author credible? □ Yes □ Maybe □ No
What sources (people, academic papers, other websites) did the author mention in the article?

ADVERTISING, SPONSORS AND COMMENTS
List three of the site’s advertisers or sponsors.
1.
2.
3.

Is the advertising biased? If so, in what way?

Are there comments on the story? What is the tone of the comments? Are they biased? If so, in what way?

What does all this lead you to conclude about the credibility of the site? Explain.