

Appendix E

Preparing Students for Research Projects

Because there are numerous sources where students can turn to find information, students need to be taught how to carefully evaluate their sources. Primarily, students should be taught to look for three things:

1 Reliability

Who is the author and what is his or her background in the subject?

Is the author someone who would know about the subject? Is it a pediatric doctor talking about diseases in dogs? Is it a third grader's report on the web?

2 Timeliness

When was the text written? Have inventions or events happened that would change the facts in the text? Is it an article about someday having computers in people's homes? Is it about a country that no longer exists? Are the maps up to date?

3 Validity

If the author comes to a conclusion, does it make sense with the facts presented or is it more of an opinion? When the author uses words such as *thus*, *therefore*, and *in conclusion*, are the facts supported?