

Lesson 12.3

EVALUATING ELECTRONIC MAINE

Objective: Students will write criteria for evaluating web pages, and then use those criteria to review three selected Maine web sites.

Materials:

- **Sheet 12.3A:** List of Suggested Maine Web Sites
- **Sheet 12.3B:** Evaluating Electronic Maine Assignment Sheet
- **Sheet 12.3C:** Evaluating Electronic Maine Grading Rubric
- Internet access for all students in the class

Timing: Three to four days, plus time spent at home

Procedure:

1. Discuss with students the many ways that the image of Maine is represented to the rest of the world. They may suggest such media as art, theater, television, news programs, novels, magazines, etc. One of the newest ways that Maine has had to learn to represent itself is on the Internet. The Internet is an excellent way to communicate information to many people at once, and the Maine State Department of Tourism uses it for just that purpose, as do many other sites about Maine. Tell students they will be browsing through several different Maine web sites, and selecting a few sites to formally review.
2. Brainstorm together what kinds of qualities the class thinks makes a good web site. You may want to show students a few different web sites you think are especially good before or while having this discussion. Ask students questions like the following:
 - What is the purpose of a web site?
 - What can it do that books, newspapers, videos, television shows, radio and other forms of communication cannot?
 - What do you like about web sites you've seen in the past? What don't you like?
 - What kinds of elements make a web site successful? Consider the following topics: use of color, variety of links, legibility, use of images, length of time it takes to load, how often it is updated, content, etc. Make a list of the items that make a web site successful on the board.
3. Working either in pairs or on their own, have students browse through a variety of Maine web sites (give them the list of suggested web sites to start with). Ask them to jot down ones they think are particularly good and why. Encourage them to use links to find new web sites not on their list. Come back together and have students share some of the sites they came across. Add any new criteria students have come up with to the group brainstorm on the board. Have students copy the notes from the brainstorm in their notebooks.

4. Give students the Evaluating Electronic Maine Assignment Sheet and Rubric. Go over the assignment and the expectations with students carefully. Assign a due date for the project, and have students write it down on their assignment sheets.
5. Give the students one or two days in class to complete their evaluations of the web sites. Have them finish their reviews at home.
6. On the day the reviews are due, allow students to trade papers with each other and examine some of each other's web sites and rating systems. Then, come back together as a class and compare notes. Ask students questions like the following:
 - Did people give the same sites very different reviews? How did they differ?
 - Any interesting new sites that people found?
 - How did rating systems differ from one another?
 - Why is a rating system an important thing to use when evaluating something?
 - Which were the class' favorite web sites? Least favorite web sites?

Evaluation: Create a rubric and have students evaluate their own work on the project. Use the same criteria in grading students yourself, taking their own self-evaluations into consideration. Students may include their reviews in their Unit Portfolio, if they choose.

Follow-up Activities:

- If you have access to a web design program, have students create their own Maine studies web sites. They should use the criteria they established for this project in designing their sites. When they are finished, have students evaluate each other, using the same criteria.
- Have students email their reviews to the creators of the web sites, and see if they get any responses back.

Alignment with the Learning Results:

Grade Level: **6th-dipl.**

Content Area: Visual and Performing Arts: **AESTHETICS AND CRITICISM**

Standard: **Aesthetics and Criticism**

Performance Indicator **D1**: Students compare and analyze art forms.

Name: _____

Date: _____

SUGGESTED MAINE STUDIES WEB SITES

***Note:** These addresses listed below may change. If an address below does not give you what you're looking for, try using a search engine like Google (at www.google.com).

- The Maine Office of Tourism: www.visitmaine.com
- The Maine Resource Guide: maineguide.com
- Maine Historical Society: www.mainehistory.org
- The Maine State Archives: www.state.me.us/sos/arc
- Maine Public Television's "Home: The Story of Maine" site: www.mpbc.org/TV/Shows/hometsom/hometsom.htm
- The (Unofficial) Abenaki Home Page: www.mill.net/slmiller/abenaki/index.htm
- Alnombak-Abenaki History/Genealogy Page: hometown.aol.com/alnombak/
- The Trail of Art on the Maine Coast: www.quoddyloop.com/toa
- The Franco-American Women's Institute: www.fawi.net
- The Osher Map Library at USM: www.usm.maine.edu/~maps
- The Pejepscot Historical Society: www.curtislibrary.com/pejepscot.htm
- Maine Memory Network: www.mainememory.net
- The Margaret Chase Smith Library: www.northwood.edu/about/mcs.html
- The Maine Folklife Center: www.umaine.edu/folklife
- Connect Maine: Maine Tourism Guide and Business Directory: www.connectmaine.com

Name: _____

Date: _____

Due Date: _____

**EVALUATING ELECTRONIC MAINE
ASSIGNMENT SHEET**

You have just been hired as a reporter for *E-Mag Maine*, a new Internet magazine. Part of your job at the magazine is to review web sites that have to do with Maine. In each issue, you review 3-5 web sites, using both a rating system and written review system.

The next issue deadline is coming up. Your task is to choose 3-5 web sites that have to do with Maine history, business, tourism, and/or culture, rate them, and review them in time for the next issue. Follow the steps below.

1. Create a rating system. Based on the discussions you have in class, create your own rating system. You can choose to rate the web sites with a number (on a scale of 1 to 10, for example), a letter (A through F), or some other system you create. Make sure you include each of the following criteria in your system: content, images, speed (how quickly it loads), and currency (how frequently the site is updated). You may include other categories of your own as well. Write an explanation of your rating system to hand in with your reviews.
2. Select your web sites. Choose 3-5 interesting web sites that you feel you can review fairly. Balance your choice: do not choose all "bad" sites or all "good" sites.
3. Using your own rating system, rate your web sites. Then, write a one-two paragraph review of each one, explaining why you gave it the rating you did and whether or not you would recommend the site to others. Make sure you consider these two questions: (1) what are the goals of the site? and (2) how well does the site accomplish its goals?
4. Hand your reviews and your rating system explanation in to your teacher on time.
Make sure you remember to include the addresses of all the web sites you review.