***Slide 2***

Teachers: the objective here is to provide high school seniors in your civics classes who are  researching and writing papers on the legislative process in the federal government, with the means to identify, navigate, compare and choose high quality online information sites to accomplish those tasks, by applying the CARS method of assessing internet sources. The skills students acquire from this presentation will better equip them to deal with the rigors of performing at the college level, when invariable they will be faced with a crush of information - much of it of dubious value, and for any number of reasons. Learning CARS gives students tangible guidelines for judging how well a site will meet their information needs. That way, when confronted with many sources that discuss a topic, students can use CARS to locate the best available ones, and discard the rest.

Students: As seniors, you will be writing research papers for your civics classes on the legislative branch of government.  While searching for information for your papers, you will uncover many websites containing information on this topic.  Much of it will be of little or no value to you in this project.  However, some of the information you may find useful.  But a word of caution -- you will do well to consider the source. It is important that as you get ready to embark on your college careers, you begin to understand how to distinguish between good and bad websites.  This presentation will help you learn to tell the difference.

***Slide 3***

Then, when searching online, you will be able to identify the authoritative and reliable sources, compare them with others out there, and choose the highest calibre online information, through use of the CARS method for evaluating internet sites..  CARS offers you tangible guidelines for judging how well a site will meet your information needs. There will be many websites that discuss the same topic. If you learn to apply CARS principles to figure out which sources offer the best quality information, you can discard the rest.

***Slide 4***

C is for credibility, A is for accuracy, R is for reasonableness, and S is for support.  We will talk more about each of these in the following slides.

***Slide 5***

Evaluating credibility is the first thing you should do when evaluating a website. Look at the url itself. Is the domain a .gov or .edu? Is there clearly posted contact information?

***Slide 6***

Next is accuracy. You want to make sure that the website you are on has posted factual and unbiased information. Also you want to make sure that the information presented is current and updated.

***Slide 7***

Next is R for Reasonableness. You want to make sure that what you are reading is coming from a reliable source that is aimed toward education rather than for propaganda or financial purposes. You want to make sure that information that is presented is in a professional tone, not a casual or informal tone. This part is related to accuracy.

***Slide 8***

If the site seems like its main purpose is to sell a product or service, it is not fit for using in your research.

***Slide 9***

Last is S for Support. Make sure assertions and arguments set forth by the author can be backed up.

***Slide 10***

When evaluating information found on the Internet, it is important to examine *who* is providing the "information" you are viewing, and what might be their *point of view* or *bias*. Use these definitions when you are unsure about a resource.

***Slide 14***

Train your mind to think critically, even suspiciously, by **asking a series of questions** that will help you decide how much a web page is to be trusted.

***Slide 16***

Now you can see some examples.  This is Thomas.  Lets go through CARS and evaluate this site.

C is for credibility.  It is a website put out by the Federal Government.

A is for accuracy. The information on the site is current, complete and correct

R is for reasonableness. The information doesn’t show a bias

S is for sources.  The information contained in the site connects to actual texts of bills

***Slide 18***

This is [*Ben’s Guide to the US Government for Kids*](http://bensguide.gpo.gov/9-12/government/national/legislative.html).  This site doesn’t look as professional as the last one.  Does that mean it is not as reliable?  Lets find out

C is for credibility.  It is a website put out by the Government Printing Office

A is for accuracy. The information on the site is simplified, but correct

R is for reasonableness. Unbiased, “just the facts” format

S is for sources.  The information from GPO

***Slide 20***

(Note: On this slide, the presenter would show this youtube clip, then resume the presentation)

Not all sources need to be strictly websites.  This is a list of YouTube videos.  But anyone can post item to YouTube.  How good is this source?

C is for credibility.  Videos uploaded by Library of Congress

A is for accuracy. Huge amounts of correct information

R is for reasonableness. Unbiased

S is for sources.  The information supplied by LoC

***Slide 22***

E-how is a “content farm” in which freelancers write articles in mostly “how” to do things.  Ehow mainly wants to produce maximum search results from search engines. This website does not meet any of the CARS method criteria, so it is suitable to be a bad website. There are a lot of advertisements on this commercial website. The entire webpage for the legislative branch is of low quality, mediocre and inferior information presented.  Very vague and the information does not go much into detail about the legislative branch.

***Slide 24***

The Onion is a satirical entertainment commercial website with many advertisements. The article “Executive, Legislative, Judicial Branches Merge” is meant to be funny, not be taken seriously.

***Slide 26***

Yahoo Answers can be answered by anyone and it is a commercial website with many ads. It is not a credible website due to lack of any researchers, professors, or experts answering people’s questions. No difference or system between correct or incorrect answer. Anyone Yahoo user can answer or ask a question and receive points, while the best answer is the one that is voted the highest, so the answer may not be 100% accurate.

***Slide 29***

Now that we have learned about the C.A.R.S. method it is time for you to do it.  You need to break into groups of two or three students.  No groups may have more than three students.  Your task is to: First, find a website on the legislative branch, it can be good or bad.  Some key words to help you search are congress, bills, legislators, republicans, democrats.  You get to choose how you search. Second, evaluate the website using the C.A.R.S. method.  I will hand out a worksheet to help you, but you have to do the evaluation.  Third, you will share your website and evaluation with the class.  This is your way to help each other find sources for you teacher’s assignment.  Finally, you must fill out the worksheet and return it to me.  This is important as I want to know what you learned.

***Slide 30***

And that brings us to the end of the presentation. Let me give a summary of what has been talked about from these past several minutes.

First, our presentation introduced the importance of the CARS checklist for evaluating websites. C stands for credibility, A for Accuracy, R for reasonableness, and S for support. Then after the CARS method, support was mentioned as well as looking for bias or points of view were discussed. Afterwards, the three examples of  each good websites and bad websites of the legislative branch were shown. Finally, students had the opportunity to look for a legislative website, then evaluate it using the CARS method, then share it with their fellow classmates while explaining their evaluation and complete the worksheet as a part of the assignment.   
As a result from this legislative project, these high school seniors will become familiar and knowledgeable about the legislative branch. The students will realize research takes skill, time, and pertinence when using the CARS method. The various levels in completing research through several types of sources and formats that will allow the students to become more comfortable, poised, and improved in performing research and assignments in the future. This concludes the presentation.