Fact Checking Worksheet

Directions: Before your next class you will add more information to your article and revise it using your peers’ notes and any comments you receive from the editors. After you have written a draft with which you are satisfied, your next step is to check all your facts. In order to do this, you must have saved all documents you used (or bookmarked websites), and after interviewing people made sure you had their contact information so you could get back to them to check your facts. Follow the steps below. When you have completed all the steps, sign and date this document on the line provided.

STEP 1 – Check names and spellings

- Go through your document and highlight or underline all names of people, places and other proper nouns. Check the spelling against original documents and online directories. If needed, call any person you talked to back, and check that his or her name is spelled correctly. If you double-checked during your interviews, that is sufficient. Get into the habit of checking the spelling of names as you are reporting.

STEP 2 – Check numbers and statistics

- Underline all numbers, percentages, dates and statistics mentioned in your article. Now go through them one at a time and check them against documents, websites and personal interviews. If you cannot find the same number (or date or time or percentage) given by MORE THAN ONE source then you cannot use it in your article. If an individual gave you a number (date etc.) during an interview, call him or her back and ask if there is a document that contains that information or if there is another person who can verify.

STEP 3 – Check quotes

- Circle all the quotes you used in your article. Contact the person who gave you the quote (using email at this point is perfectly acceptable) and let them know you are simply double-checking your facts for your article. Read (or email) them the exact quotes you are using and ask if they were recorded correctly. Let the person know what your deadline is so that they know when they need to get back to you by. If they don’t confirm, you cannot use the quote, unless you have it on a tape recording or there was a second person at the interview who wrote down the same quote.

STEP 4 – Check for bias

- Read through your article and check to see if there are any words you’ve used that may show bias or a slanted position (this does not include reviews or opinions). Have you presented all facts and information in as fair and balanced a way as possible? If you wrote a review, which contains your opinion, did you provide adequate facts to support your position?

Getting the facts right is a matter of journalistic ethics and integrity. NEVER submit work that contains facts you cannot or have not verified. By signing below you certify that you have completed all parts of this fact checking assignment thoroughly and completely.

Signed: ___________________________________________ Date: _____________________