Criteria for Evaluating Nonfiction Books

Format
- Is the book visually appealing? Does it invite the reader to browse through it?
- Does it pique the reader’s interest?
- Are there enough visuals and enough colour to make the book appealing?

Organization and Style
- Is the material presented in a clear and unambiguous way?
- Does the book create a feeling of reader involvement and convey a positive tone?
- Does the author use vivid and interesting language?
- Is the content structured clearly and logically, with appropriate subheadings?
- Are there reference aids, such as a table of contents, index, bibliography, glossary and appendix?

Content
- Is the content presented in a manner that allows children to connect it with their own experiences?
- Where content has been simplified, does it retain accuracy?
- Does the book include the author’s sources as well as additional information for keen readers who want to learn more?
- Does the book provide Internet links?
- Is the book current and does it reflect (and mention) current research activity in the field?
- Are the qualifications and experiences of the authors presented?
- Does the book avoid stereotypes and present differing viewpoints?
- Is a distinction made among fact, theory, and opinion?
- Does the book foster a scientific method of inquiry?
- Are there appropriate and sufficient maps, charts, and diagrams to add to the reader’s understanding of the text?
- Are the graphics and illustrations an appropriate size?
- Are the graphics and illustrations clearly understandable and well labelled?
- Do the maps, charts and diagrams contain appropriate detail?

From: Constructing meaning: balancing the elementary language arts by Joyce Bainbridge et al. 4th ed. 2009, p. 381. (in Doucette, 372.6 BaC 2009)