What is **criteria** (pl.)?

Criteria is a set of rules, guidelines, standards, etc. that are the basis for a fair evaluation of something’s value, worth, function, etc.

The singular is “criterion.”

For example, fair criteria for evaluating *Chipotle* as a restaurant for parents with small children might be a) value for food portions, b) healthy options and variety, and c) atmosphere/seating, and d) service speed.

Fair criteria for evaluating AC/DC’s *Back in Black* as a classic rock album for modern rock music afficianados might be a) influence and inspiration of others, b) staying power and appeal for multiple decades, and c) unique and recognizable sound.

Criteria depends upon the purpose of the subject matter, the purpose of the author writing the evaluation, and the appropriateness for the author’s target audience.