

Using the Internet to Research

Grade Level: Middle School and High School
(Lesson Plan can be adapted for High School)

Materials Required: A computer lab with Internet access

Activity Time: 30- 45 min

Concepts Taught: Internet and Research

Topic: The Internet as a research tool.

Objectives:

The Student will be able to...

1. Demonstrate knowledge of what a search engine is and how to use a search engine.
2. Perform Internet searches on assigned topics with accuracy.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of how the internet can be used for researching topics.

Materials:

Bowl of pencil shavings; a silver paper clip; a colored paper clip; a magnet; mobile classroom

Introduction:

Put the two metal paper clips in a bowl of pencil shavings. Have the students try to find the colored paper clip by digging through it. If it is found put it back into the bowl and then, using a magnet, “find” the paper clip by the attraction that the magnet causes. (Both magnets should be found right away, but this will demonstrate a search engine’s ability to find sites on a particular topic while not necessarily finding the site that you want.)

“You have all noticed how it is much easier to find something that you are looking for if you use the proper tool. How many of you have ever tried to find information on something, or a particular web site on the internet? How did you do it? Was it difficult or easy?”

Transition:

Today, we are going to learn how to use a tool to find the web sites that we want to find on the Internet.

Students should be instructed to go to their computer stations. (Students can work alone or in pairs – two to each computer. These pairs will become assignment teams to work on the homework assignment together.)

Sequence of Activities:

1. “What is the best way to find a web site on a certain topic on the internet?” (Perform a search on that topic.)
2. “What is the tool called that we use to perform a search on the internet? (A search engine.)
3. Instruct the students to click on the internet icon on their desktops.
4. Have the students find a search engine on their computers. (Hitting the search button at the top of the screen is a good place to start.) View all of the screens to make sure that all of the students

have found a search engine.

5. When students have found a “search engine,” instruct them to enter www.msn.com in the web address field. This will insure uniformity of instruction.

6. Once all of the students have entered the MSN site, instruct them to enter the words “horse training” into the “search” field and press the “search” button.

7. After a list of web sites and pages has been compiled, ask them if they can think of a way to define their search more clearly. (e.g. – they could perform a search on horse training schools, horse training tips, horse training magazines, etc.)

8. Instruct the students to perform a more defines search of their choice pertaining to a horse topic.

9. Instruct the students to enter the web sites that these searches have provided to see if these web sites are what they are looking for. They must be sure to enter the first site that is suggested.

10. Have the students share with the class what kind of a search they performed and what the first web sites contained. Call on 5 or 6 students.

11. After students have explored their web sites for 5-7 minutes; instruct them to turn around in their chairs away from their computer and facing the teacher.

12. Give the students the following information and tips about web site searching using a search engine:

- Search engines allow us to locate web sites that contain the information that we are looking for, but do they always give us a web site containing exactly what we need? (The answer is “Not always.” Allow some discussion about this.)
- So we know that although search engines are useful to us, we still need to check out the sites that it lists for us, and we may find it necessary to limit our search with a more defining description of what we are looking for.
- When a search engine compiles a list of sites for us, it lists the more probably ones first, so your best choice will probably be the one near the top of the list. Did you find this to be true? (allow more discussion.)

13-17 may need to be done as a homework assignment.

13. Instruct the students to run a search on the “American Colonies.”

14. Have them explore some of the sites that are listed as a result of this search for about 5-7 minutes.

15. Instruct them to narrow this topic in a way that they choose (e.g. Benjamin Franklin, the Georgia Colony, the Constitutional Convention, etc.) and then perform another search using the topic they have chosen.

16. Have the students compile a list of the web sites from a search on their topic.

17. Instruct the students to write a 1-2-page paper, typed, about the topic they have chosen. They must also include bibliographic information.

Evaluation:

Students will demonstrate that they have knowledge of how to use a search engine both by compiling a list of ten web sites on a topic deduced from “American Colonies” and by writing a two-page paper about the topic they have decided on using information from their web sites.

Lesson plan slightly modified <http://teachers.net/lessons/posts/2233.html>

