

Working with Web Text

Pembroke's Friday Freebie



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How do questions facilitate working with web text? (for younger students)

Q Task

Students will develop questions and apply tips for reading and working with web text.

Q Tip

It is very easy to get lost in the sea of information available on many web sites. The best way to stay on course is to develop questions that serve as guideposts. These questions can be teacher-developed at first. Students need to keep revisiting these questions as they work their way through the site, to make sure they do not wander off track and waste valuable time.

This Q Task is adapted from Loertscher, Koechlin and Zwaan (2011).

Clarifying the Task

In this sample, the class is preparing to conduct independent study of issues related to air quality. This task will give students opportunities to explore many aspects of air quality, such as smog, car emissions, ozone, health concerns, etc. Students will explore selected web sites with teacher-developed guiding questions, and keep track of their learning and new questions as they travel from site to site.

Building Understanding

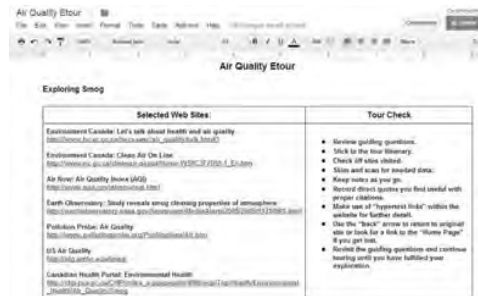
- Collect news clips and/or articles related to air-quality issues. View/read these current news items and dialogue with students to begin building background information.
- Inform students that you want them to gain further insight into multiple issues by exploring some selected web sites. Ask students to explain how they find information they need on sites that are new to them.
- Record their ideas and introduce the Tips for Reading Web Text list (page 101). Model the tips suggested by exploring a web site and voicing your thoughts and questions as you explore.

Demonstrating Understanding

- Provide copies of the Air Quality E-tour (page 102) and prepare students for the tour. Remind them to review their Tips for Reading Web Text and to follow the E-tour itinerary.
- Students will record their findings on the Air Quality E-tour Map worksheet (page 103) and keep track of their own personal questions as they tour the web sites. This tour will give students a working knowledge of important issues so they will be able to select an aspect in which they are personally interested in exploring for independent study.
- When students have had practice with E-tours and guiding questions, they will be ready to develop their own questions, find reliable sources, and record their initial exploratory findings using an organizer such as KWHLQ (page 64).

Q+

Create the E-tour with a collaborative tool, such as Google Docs, so students can work with others to build knowledge and teachers can check progress and coach students by posting digital comments on their work.



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Tips for Reading Web Text



- What is your purpose? Why are you reading?
 - To find specific facts (dates, weather, statistics)
 - To conduct research about a topic
 - To prepare for a class discussion
 - For fun and relaxation
- Preview the page to gain an overview.
- Pick up bits of data that catch your eye.
- Skim read the titles and subtitles.
- Use the scroll bar to see the entire page.
- Check out the tabs and any other contents lists or tools.
- Connect with what you already know.
- Predict what you think you will learn.
- Decide if this is a good source for you.
- **Jot down some questions about things you hope to discover.**
- Use these questions to focus your navigation so you won't waste time. **Your guiding questions will keep you on track.**
- Make use of visual information (pictures, maps, charts, graphs, etc.)
- Look for sidebars and captions (summary points, important facts, see also references, etc.)
- Look for bolded words, colored text to indicate key information and hyperlinks.
- Navigate the text and the site using tools available.
- **Review your guiding questions frequently.**
- Read for needed detail.
- Return to the home page if the data is off topic and try another link.
- Keep point notes and sketches as you navigate and read.
- Record site URL or bookmark it so you can return easily.

Have you answered all your questions?

Do you need to find another site to confirm your findings?

Do you have more questions?

How do questions facilitate working with web text? (for older students)

Q Task

Students will develop questions and apply tips for reading and working with web text.

Clarifying the Task

In this sample, the class is preparing to write an argumentative essay on a topic of their choice related to Canadian Law. This is a culminating activity, so students have considerable experience with Canadian Law issues. Students have determined a topic of interest and consulted with their teacher for approval. They are ready to develop a focus for their essay and begin research. This task is supported by a Pathfinder, developed to guide students to best possible resources available to them through the school library or district web portal.

Building Understanding

- Students prepare for research by focusing the potential of their topic with questions using the Researching with Questions organizer on page 105.
- Review Tips for Reading Web Text (page 101). Model the tips by exploring a database and voicing your thoughts and questions as you explore.
- Provide students with a link to a Pathfinder. Review the suggested databases and links to Canadian Law sources.
- Review referencing formats and introduce students to online citation tools, such as Citation Machine (<http://www.citationmachine.net/>) or EasyBib bibliography creator.

Demonstrating Understanding

- Students will record their findings to prepare for their essay using a collaborative digital space that they can access from anywhere they have Internet and share work with their teacher(s); e.g., Google Docs. Their notes will be reviewed and assessed by the teacher as a component of their research process mark.
- Students will build and archive their reference lists, draft the final essay, and save everything in digital folders as they proceed.

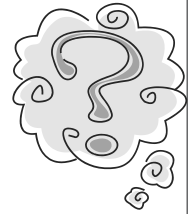
Q+

A Pathfinder (see sample on page 105) is a guide for researchers that contains consolidated lists of the best resources on a topic. It is usually developed collaboratively by teacher-librarians and teachers as they plan a unit of study, but it could be developed collaboratively with students as they explore a topic and suggest excellent resources they have found. It includes all the resources students might find useful for an inquiry. The Pathfinder should link students to online subscription databases available from the school library/district portal. It might contain Dewey Decimal numbers to locate materials in the library and vetted URLs to locate materials on the Internet. In addition, it could include primary source documents and contact information for experts who might be able to address specific questions related to a topic. The Pathfinder can be developed simply as a document with live links and mounted on the library/classroom web site, or it can be developed in a collaborative wiki or by using web tools, such as Live Binders (<http://www.livebinders.com/>), Flipboard (<https://flipboard.com/>), or LibGuides (<http://springshare.com/libguides/>).

Q Tip

Critical and creative thinking is a major outcome of the Learning Commons when working with any kind of text. Explore the OSLA document *Together for Learning* (www.togetherforlearning.ca) for ideas.

Researching with Questions



Topic: _____ Name: _____

Now that you have decided on your topic, invest some time in thinking about what you want to find out as you research. Think about people and places involved, events that took place, and issues that come to mind. Consider the topic from different points of view or perspectives. What are you curious about? What do you want to learn? What will be the focus of your investigations? Now that you know what you want to explore, develop some questions to guide your research. Select the questions you care most about. They will be the focus of your research. Good questions mean good answers. Remember that questions should be analytical in nature and not merely require a factual response.

Does
Can
Will
Must
Should
Would
Could
Have
Has
Is
Are

NOTE: It is okay to keep adding questions during your research as you discover new connections and perspectives.

Q Task Quickies

Questioning on the Web

E-Tours

Your students can create their own e-tours (see pages 100–103) as a presentation/product to demonstrate both their understanding of a topic and their ability to navigate the Internet and select the best web resources to support their topic. Students will develop guiding questions to help their readers uncover important information and develop their own understanding of the topic or issue. Encourage them to use archiving tools; e.g., LibGuides or Scoop.it.

Scavenger/Treasure Hunts

This web activity—essentially a fact-finding mission—is usually used when teachers want to give novice web users practice in navigating the web and using search tools effectively. Turn the tables by inviting students to demonstrate their new web navigational skills in the creation of their own scavenger hunts and treasure hunts for other students to complete. The strategy can also be used to build background information about a topic: instruct students to explore web sites and evaluate them to select the best, and then develop factual questions for students to discover the answers to. For more information, see *Scavenger Hunts: Searching for Treasure on the Internet* (http://www.education-world.com/a_curr/curr113.shtml).

WebQuests

A well-crafted WebQuest is an engaging inquiry experience that allows students to use the potential of the web to make quick links to the best information. An effective WebQuest poses a problem or question for students to explore and provides adequate learning advice to prompt analysis and synthesis. The conclusion should raise more questions and spark further investigation. There are many teacher-developed WebQuests on the web; many are able to elevate students to think critically and creatively. For more information, see *The WebQuest Page—Bernie Dodge* (<http://webquest.sdsu.edu/>) and *Best WebQuests* (<http://bestwebquests.com/>).

Comparisons

This activity is useful for helping students understand that some sources of information are better than others, depending on the specific needs they have. Instruct students to create their own questions for comparing two resources. Encourage students to experiment with making lots of questions, using tools such as the Question Builder Frames on page 71. Students could compare

- web sites on the same topic
- online encyclopedias
- search engines
- a web site and a book
- an online encyclopedia and a print encyclopedia