Choosing a Search Site

Essential Question
What features does a good search site have?

Lesson Overview
Through online observations, students record and compare the features of different search sites. They learn to choose the best site or sites to suit their purposes.

Students work in groups to explore some popular search sites designed for children. Using the checklist found on their Check Out Search Sites Student Handout, they identify and record the features offered by one of the sites, then compare and contrast these with other sites. Students then use the Search Site Features Student Handout to identify the keywords in a search question, search several children’s search sites, and come up with a list of features for a good search site.

Learning Objectives
Students will be able to ...

• compare and contrast features of children’s search sites.
• understand that they can choose the best sites for each of their searches.
• explain why it is best to utilize multiple sites when doing research.

Materials and Preparation
• Copy the Check Out Search Sites Student Handout, one for each pair (or group) of students.
• Review the Check Out Search Sites Student Handout – Teacher Version.
• Copy the Search Site Features Student Handout, one for each student.
• Preview the sites listed on the Check Out Search Sites Student Handout and the Search Site Features Student Handout, and be prepared to assist students in observing their features.

Family Resources
• Send home the Smart Searching Family Tip Sheet (Elementary School).

Estimated time: 60 minutes

Standards Alignment – Common Core:
grade 3: RI.1, RI.3, RI.4, RI.7, RI.10, RF.4a, RF.4b, W.7, W.8, SL.1a, SL.1b, SL.1c, SL.1d, SL.2, SL.3, SL.4, SL.6, L.3a, L.6
grade 4: RL.9, RL.10, RI.1, RI.3, RI.4, RI.7, RI.9, RI.10, RF.4a, W.9b, SL.1a, SL.1b, SL.1c, SL.1d, SL.4, SL.5, L.3a, L.6
grade 5: RL.9, RL.10, RI.3, RI.4, RI.7, RI.10, RF.4a, W.9b, SL.1a, SL.1b, SL.1c, SL.1d, SL.4, SL.5, SL.6, L.6
NETS-S: 3a, 3c

Key Vocabulary –
keywords: the most important words related to a subject
search site: any website that helps you find the information you want
home page: the first page that opens on a website, which contains links to other pages on the site
features: the important parts or special attractions of something
introduction

**Warm-up (5 minutes)**

**DEFINE** the Key Vocabulary term **keywords**.

**ASK:**

*What do you do when you want to search the Internet for information about a topic?*

Encourage students to come up with their own responses, then guide them through the following:

- Type in some keywords and hit “search”
- Type in a question
- Look for my topic in a list of subjects

*Where do you go when you want to find this information?*

Students may name popular search sites such as Google or Yahoo!

**DEFINE** the Key Vocabulary terms **search site** and **features**.

**EXPLAIN** to students that they will be looking at some search sites that are designed especially for kids. Each search site has different features.

**teach 1**

**Check Out Search Sites (25 minutes)**

**ARRANGE** students in pairs or small groups.

**DISTRIBUTE** the **Check Out Search Sites Student Handout**, one for each pair or group. Explain that students will be looking at three different search sites for kids. Refer to the **Check Out Search Sites Student Handout – Teacher Version** for activity guidance.

**INVITE** students to share their recorded observations with the class. If there are disagreements about the features of a site, you may wish to revisit the site to discuss it further.

**ASK** students which search sites they might use in the future, encouraging them to draw from their responses to prompt #3 on the **Check Out Search Sites Student Handout**.

**Which search site did you like the best?**

**Why?**

Sample responses:

- I liked .... because there are a lot of images.
- I liked ... because I can search by category.

**Which search site did you like the least?**

**Why?**

Sample responses:

- I didn’t like ... because the results page looks cluttered and hard to read.
- I didn’t like ... because there are ads that don’t relate to my search.

**DISCUSS** with students why it is important to use multiple search sites when looking for information. Remind
them that for prompt #2, when they searched for information about the sun, each search site produced a
different list of websites on its results page. Searching more than one search site will give them more results to
choose from.

**teach 2**

**Explore Good Search Site Features** *(25 minutes)*

**Distribute** the *Search Site Features Student Handout*, one for every student. Students should continue
to work in pairs or groups, but each student should complete his or her own handout.

**Read** over the handout instructions and assign one of the following questions (or offer topics that relate to your
course material) to each pair or group of students:

- What is a dog’s sense of smell like?
- How can cats see in the dark?
- Why can’t fish breathe air?
- What did dinosaurs eat?

**Discuss** the process of searching these topics on different search sites. Discussion questions you could ask
students are:

- Was it easy to search?
- Did you find the results you were looking for?
- Did the results page present the results list in a helpful way?

**Have** students share the features they wrote for prompt #3 of the *Search Site Features Student Handout*.
Consider compiling students’ guidelines on the board, or put them in a Word document that you can later print
out and distribute. Sample responses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Searching Page</th>
<th>Results Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has a list of categories I can choose from</td>
<td>Shows the reading level of the results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lets me do an advanced search</td>
<td>Shows an image with the link</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a way to search images</td>
<td>Gives me ratings of the websites</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Encourage** students to look for these features when choosing a search site.

**closing**

**Wrap-up** *(5 minutes)*

You can use these questions to assess your students’ understanding of the lesson objectives. You may want to ask
students to reflect in writing on one of the questions, using a journal or an online blog/wiki.

**Ask:**

- What are the names of some search sites for kids?

Students should be able to name the sites you used in class, such as KidsClick!, FactMonster, or Google Safe Search.
What are some of the ways these search sites differ?

Students should be aware that different sites offer various ways you can search and display results.

Why is it a good idea to use more than one search site when looking for information?

Students should know that different sites will give different results. Therefore, searching at more than one site provides a wider variety of results and more information on a topic.

How will looking for good features on search sites help you?

Students should consider how looking for the best search sites will help them when they do other searches in the future.

Extension Activity

In groups, have students explore many other search sites at NoodleTools’s “Choose the Best Search for Your Information” (www.noodletools.com/debbie/literacies/information/5locate/adviceengine.html).

Ask students to locate which sites they might use on a search scavenger hunt to find the following items:

- a quote from astronaut Buzz Aldrin
- the title and year of a famous work of art by Monet
- an image of a great white shark
- the biography of Jackie Robinson
- the latest news story about the president of the United States

Have students list the sites on which they found the items (along with what information they found), and compare with other groups in class. They can either show their computer screen or print out a page for each item.

At-Home Activity

Distribute one additional copy of the Check Out Search Sites Student Handout to take home. Assign each of the following search sites to one-third of the class. Have them complete their handouts at home with a family member. Students can then discuss with the class what they liked best and least about each of these sites:

- KidRex: www.kidrex.org
- Awesome Library: www.awesomelibrary.org/student.html
- Quintura for Kids: www.quinturakids.com
Choosing a Search Site

Directions
1. Visit these three sites. Read the list of features below and check all boxes that apply.
   - Google Safe Search: www.safesearchkids.com
   - FactMonster: www.factmonster.com
   - KidsClick!: www.kidsclick.org

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>SEARCHING</strong></th>
<th>Google Safe Search</th>
<th>FactMonster</th>
<th>KidsClick!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>How can you search at this site?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keyword search</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask a question</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject categories</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjects by first letter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picture search</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced search</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What else can you do at this search site?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read questions from other kids</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add a site</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get homework help</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search for lessons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play games</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See a movie</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See advertisements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Next, try searching for information about the **sun** on these sites. Look at the results page and check off the areas you see in the chart below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Google Safe Search</th>
<th>FactMonster</th>
<th>KidsClick!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What kind of information do you see on the results page?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site title</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URL (the website address)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether the site has images</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertisements</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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3. Which search site did you like the best? Explain why.

I like __________________ the best because __________________

____________________________

____________________________

____________________________

Use Common Sense!
Always choose more than one search site because:

- Each site will give you different results.
- You can compare information on different sites.
- You will get more information in your search.
Choosing a Search Site

Directions

1. Visit these three sites. Read the list of features below and check all boxes that apply.

   - Google Safe Search: www.safesearchkids.com
   - FactMonster: www.factmonster.com
   - KidsClick!: www.kidsclick.org

When looking at which search features are available, students should carefully study the site's home page. They can also click on some links and see what they find there.

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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keyword search</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
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<td>Ask a question</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Advanced search</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

What else can you do at this search site?

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2. Next, try searching for information about the **sun** on these sites. Look at the results page and check off the areas you see in the chart below.

_Students should input the keyword “kites” and then focus on the list of webpages that appears on the results page. On some sites, results pages also include other elements, such as images, ads, or links to other parts of the site. Assist students in distinguishing these elements from the main list of search results._

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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Which search site did you like the best? Explain why.

I like __________________ the best because __________________

_Students should think about which features they liked most and least. They should also consider the results of their search, and whether the results were clear and useful._

**Use Common Sense!**

Always choose more than one search site because:

- Each site will give you different results.
- You can compare information on different sites.
- You will get more information in your search.
Choosing a Search Site

Directions

1. List the keywords you will use for your assigned question. Be sure to use different keywords for your search.

2. As you search, pay attention to the features of the search site. Use at least three of the websites below for your search. Circle the sites you visited.

   My search topic: __________________________________________

   - Google Safe Search: www.safesearchforkids.com
   - FactMonster: www.factmonster.com
   - KidRex: www.kidrex.org
   - KidsClick!: www.kidsclick.org
   - Quintura for Kids: www.quinturakids.com

3. Write a list of at least two features that a good search site should have for searching and for results.

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   (Sample)
Choosing a Search Site

1. Mimi is writing a report about China. What is the best way for Mimi to collect information for her report?

   a) Mimi should search for information using more than one site
   b) Mimi should just use the first site she finds
   d) Mimi should start her search with the word “animals” because China has some interesting animals

2. What kind of search would you use to answer the questions below? Write the letter of the question in the correct box.

   a) What does Earth look like from outer space?
   b) How many stomachs does a cow have?
   c) Do polar bears live at the North Pole?
   d) What did San Francisco look like after the earthquake in 1906?

3. Why is it best to use more than one search site?

   a) Different sites give you different results
   b) Searching more than one site will give you more information
   c) Different sites have different ways to search
   d) All of the above
Choosing a Search Site

1. Mimi is writing a report about China. What is the best way for Mimi to collect information for her report?

   a) Mimi should search for information using more than one site  
   b) Mimi should just use the first site she finds  
   c) Mimi should start her search with the word “animals” because China has some interesting animals

   Answer feedback
   The correct answer is a. By using more than one site, Mimi will have more information to choose from. She should probably search with the word “China” because that’s what her report is about.

2. What kind of search would you use to answer the questions below? Write the letter of the question in the correct box.

   Answer feedback
   A picture search would be best for answer choices a and d. A picture search is helpful when you just need to see what something looks like. At other times, you need facts related to a subject. That’s when you should choose a keyword search. A keyword search is most suitable for choices b and c.

3. Why is it best to use more than one search site?

   a) Different sites give you different results  
   b) Searching more than one site will give you more information  
   c) Different sites have different ways to search  
   d) All of the above

   Answer feedback
   The correct answer is d. Using more than one search site will help you with your search in lots of ways.