

Lesson Skill: Locating information quickly in a variety of resources

Strand Research

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Materials

- Dictionaries
- Thesauruses
- Almanac
- Atlas
- Internet access

Lesson

1. This lesson works best when done in the library/media center. Open the lesson by discussing with students a real-life example of a time when you needed particular information, for example, when making a decision about purchasing a car. Tell students where and how you found that information, and how it was helpful. For example, you may have used *Consumer Reports* magazine or online to help you select a reliable used car and then used *Kelly Blue Book* online to find out a fair price for that car and for your trade-in. Tell students that this is an example of real-life research. Ask students why it is important to know where and how to find needed information. Be sure responses include that it is misleading and a waste of time to look in inappropriate sources and that you might spend too much money if you do not find out important information. Stress that as students do research now and in the future, knowing where and how to look will be a key skill in finding the information they need.
2. Review with students the types of print and electronic references to which they have access and the types of information found in each. Together with students, generate a question for use of each source. For example, the answer to the question, “What is the capital of Somalia?” could be found in an almanac or atlas. It could also be found online. Discuss with students which would likely be fastest or easiest. Which would be most reliable? How can you tell which printed resources are reliable and which are not? How can you tell which online resources are reliable and which are not? Discuss evaluation of online resources and ways to judge their reliability.
3. Divide students into cooperative groups of two to four, and ask each group to generate a list of ten questions that can be answered by using the various print and electronic references available to them. Point out that this activity will be more interesting if they do

not already know the answers but would like to know them. Circulate to help students write interesting questions that will require using different reference sources.

4. Have groups trade lists of questions and find the answers using reference materials. Assist as necessary, emphasizing that the goal is to pick the reference source that will provide an accurate answer most quickly and easily.
5. After groups have found most of their answers, review the activity. Which questions were easiest to answer? Why? Which were the hardest? Why? How did being familiar with the resources help in finding the answers?
6. Close the lesson by reminding students that a key skill in research is knowing which source to use and how to use it in order to locate different types of information.