



Essential Question: What features does a good search site have?

Learning Overview and Objectives

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.

objectives

Students will:

- 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

Estimated time: 45 minutes

Materials

- **Check Out Search Sites Student Handout**
- **Search Site Features Student Handout**

Preparation

- Copy the **Check Out Search Sites Student Handout**, one for each pair (or group) of students
- Copy the **Search Site Features Student Handout**, one for every 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

Parent Resources

- Send parents the **Smart Searching for Elementary Students Parent Tip Sheet**

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



teaching plans

Introduce

Introduce the Key Vocabulary word **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

ASK *Where do you go when you want to find this information?* (Students may name popular search sites such as Google, Yahoo, KidsClick!, Ask.com, Quintura, or Factmonster.)

INTRODUCE the Key Vocabulary words **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

ARRANGE students in pairs. If your classroom has a limited number of computers, students may work in larger 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. The sites, listed at the top of the chart in the **Check Out Search Sites Student Handout**, are as follows:

- Yahoo! Kids®: www.kids.yahoo.com
- Ask Kids®: www.askkids.com
- KidsClick!®: www.kidsclick.org

GUIDE students to observe the features of each site.

- For question 1: 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. (For example, the link on Yahoo! Kids called “Ask Earl” allows students to ask questions, while KidsClick! has subject categories.)
- For question 2: When doing a search on kites, students should use the **keyword kites**, 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.)
- For question 3: 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.



INVITE groups 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.

ENCOURAGE students to discuss their answers to question 3: “Which search site did you like the best and the least?” Ask students to identify features that the sites all have in common, and features that differ from site to site. Students should explain why they think the different sites chose those particular features. Examples of student answers are:

What do you like best?

- *I like that there are a lot of images.*
- *I like that I can search by category.*

What do you like least?

- *The results page looks cluttered and hard to read.*
- *I dislike that 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 when they searched for information about kites, 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

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 each pair or group a different search on one of the following questions (or offer topics that relate to your course material):

- 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?*

SHARE the features students wrote in question 3 of the student handout. Compile students' guidelines on the board, or put them in a Word document that you can later print out and distribute to students.



Sample responses:

Searching Page	Results Page
Has a list of categories I can choose from	Shows the reading level of the results
Lets me do an advanced search	Shows an image with the link
Has a way to search images	Gives me ratings of the websites

Ask students which search sites they might use in the future, and have them explain their responses.

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

Wrap Up and Assess

You can use these questions to assess your students' understanding of the lesson objectives.

ASK

What are the names of some children's search sites? (Students should be able to name Ask Kids, KidsClick!, and Yahoo! Kids, and should be encouraged to name other sites they have used.)

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:

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 Susan B. Anthony
- 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.



Homework

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.

- **Fact Monster:** www.factmonster.com
- **Awesome Library:** www.awesomelibrary.org/student.html
- **Quintura for Kids:** www.quinturakids.com

Alignment with Standards – National Educational Technology Standards for Students® 2007

(Source: International Society for Technology in Education, 2007)

3. Research and Information Fluency

- a. plan strategies to guide inquiry
- c. evaluate and select information sources and digital tools based on the appropriateness to specific tasks

Common Sense Media is an independent, nonprofit resource that helps families and educators teach kids how to be safe and smart in today's 24/7 media world. Go to www.commonsensemedia.org for thousands of reviews and expert advice.



Name(s) _____

Class _____

Date _____

Directions

1. Visit these sites and check out their different features. Mark in the box whether or not each site offers the feature that helps with searching.

- Yahoo! Kids®: www.kids.yahoo.com
- Ask Kids®: www.askkids.com
- KidsClick!®: www.kidsclick.org

SEARCHING

	Yahoo! Kids	Ask Kids	KidsClick!
How can you search at this site?			
Keyword search	✓	✓	✓
Ask a question			
Subject categories			
Subjects by first letter			
Picture search			
Advanced search			
What else can you do at this search site?			
Read/respond to message boards			
Read questions from other kids			
Submit a site			
Get homework help			
Search lessons			
Play games			
See a movie			
Chat			
Other (describe) _____			



2. Next, do a search for information about kites. Look at the results page and check off the areas you see in the chart below.



	Yahoo! Kids	Ask Kids	KidsClick!
What kind of information do you see on the results page?			
Site title			
URL (the website address)			
Summary			
Grade level			
Whether the site has images			
Subject			
Description			

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

Like best: _____

Like least: _____

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.

Common Sense Media is an independent, nonprofit resource that helps families and educators teach kids how to be safe and smart in today's 24/7 media world. Go to www.commonsensemedia.org for thousands of reviews and expert advice.



Name(s) _____

Class _____

Date _____

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: _____

- Yahoo! Kids®: www.kids.yahoo.com
- Ask Kids®: www.askkids.com
- KidsClick!®: www.kidsclick.org
- Fact Monster: www.factmonster.com
- Awesome Library: www.awesomelibrary.org/student.html
- Quintura for Kids: www.quinturakids.com
- SafeSearch for Kids www.safesearchkids.com/google-for-kids.html

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

Searching Page	Results Page
(Sample) Has a list of categories I can choose from	(Sample) Shows the reading level of the results