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READING STRATEGY

WRITING STRATEGY

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Getting Ready to Read: Gathering and Evaluating
Information from Web Pages – Grades 7 - 9

Students need to develop the skills and knowledge of information technologies to harness the power, effectiveness, efficiency and excitement of learning in the information age. (OSLA, 1998)

The World Wide Web has become a pervasive influence on all of our lives. Effective use of the Internet to acquire information is an essential skill to becoming literate in the 21st century. A large majority of students are now using the Web as their main source of information. However, the results often lead to endless pages of information, much of which is not useful. Providing students with an approach to critically evaluate websites can be the key to using this vast resource well.

Purpose
- Develop an understanding of the concepts of bias, stereotyping, inclusivity and credibility.
- Explore a process of critically evaluating websites to ensure that the information available is unbiased and accurate.

Payoff
Students will:
- become more efficient at assessing the value and usability of Internet websites.
- develop critical thinking and information literacy skills.
- analyze and evaluate information using a variety of strategies.
- establish criteria for evaluating an Internet resource.

Tips and Resources
- Some of the issues that need to be addressed when evaluating Internet resources are bias, stereotyping, inclusivity and credibility. Students need an understanding of these concepts before accessing the computer. The teacher can lead a brainstorming session on the meanings/examples of these terms to assess if the students have the required knowledge and previous experience to continue. See Teacher Resource, *Website Evaluation Guide* and Student Resource, *Checklist for Evaluating Websites.*
- Some terminology may be new for students and teachers. Refer to Student/Teacher Resource, *Glossary of Website Terms*.
- To prepare for this activity:
  - make arrangements to access the necessary computer hardware, e.g., LCD projector and demonstration computer.
  - select 2 or 3 examples of good and bad websites (See The ABCs of Website Eevaluation and/or The Good, The Bad and The Ugly in Website Supports)
  - visit the suggested sites in the Teacher Resource, *Website Supports* to find further teaching strategies and links to possible sites.
  - check to make sure that all of the sites are still active.
  - decide which sites will be used and how the students will access them.
- See Student/Teacher Resource, *Searching Strategies for World Wide Web.*
- See Teacher Resource, *Website Supports* for related information and further assistance.
- See Student/Teacher Resource, *Citing Website Sources.*

Beyond Monet, Chapter 8 (Concept Attainment).
Information Studies, Kindergarten to Grade 12, OSLA, 1999. Available at:
http://www.accessola.com/action/positions/info_studies/html/intro.html

Further Support
- Have students work in pairs or in small groups.

Getting Ready to Read: Gathering and Evaluating
Information from Web Pages – Grades 7 - 9

What teachers do	What students do

Before
 • Refer to Tips and Resources to prepare for this activity.
 • Review your School Board's *Acceptable Use Policy* and ensure that students are aware of its contents.
 • Walk through examples of good and bad websites with the students and discuss their features.
 	
 • Brainstorm key terminology with the class before accessing the Web so gaps in student knowledge can be determined. See Student/Teacher Resource, *Searching Strategies for the World Wide Web*.
	• Discuss the School Board's *Acceptable Use Policy.*
	
	 • Discuss features of websites as they review them with the teacher.
	
	 • Think about the information they are trying to find on the Internet in terms of:
	     - people
	     - terms
	     - organizations
	     - places
	     - objects, etc.
	 • Make a list of key ideas, exact phrases or terms that would describe the topic as precisely as possible.

During • Model the process of evaluating a website with a *Think Aloud* using 2 or 3 examples. • Model the reading strategies students would use when reading informational text. • Have students investigate advanced searching techniques on search engine sites (e.g. www.google.com, www.yahoo.com). See "*Information about search engines"* in Teacher Resource, *Website Supports* for more information. • Remind students of the need to properly cite any information used; provide an appropriate style with examples. See Student/Teacher Resource, *Citing Website Sources.* • Monitor students to ensure appropriate sites are being accessed. • Engage students in discussions about the content of sites they are viewing.	• Use the list of key words generated – the more precise the words to include or exclude, the more valuable your search results will be. • Use the proper format for citing information. • Use a graphic organizer to keep information and thoughts organized. • Think critically about everything on the Web. Ask questions about it. Look for other sources that can validate or substantiate what information is found.
After • Encourage students to reflect on the sites they find and the process they used to search (see Student Resource, *Checklist for Evaluating Websites*).	• Reflect on how and where they found useful information using Student Resource, *Checklist for Evaluating Websites*.

Searching Strategies for the World Wide Web

1. Think about the information you are trying to find on the Internet in terms of:
    *   people
    *   key words
    *   organizations
    *   places
    *   objects, etc.

    From this, make a list of key ideas, exact phrases or terms that would describe the topic as precisely as possible.

2. Learn and use the advanced search options, available on most search engine sites.

3. Use the list of key words generated – the more precise the words to include or exclude, the more valuable your search results will be.

4. If a page has "gone missing" (Error 404) or if there might be more useful information on this site, trim back the URL to the previous slash. Repeating this process might turn up other error messages, but it might also lead to a better starting point.

5. Don't get 'stuck' sifting through pages that don't seem quite right. Move on to other pages, or revisit and revise previous steps taken.

Teacher Resource

Website Evaluation Guide

Credibility

- Is the site appropriate for your students?
- Is there a creation/last-updated date on the site?
- Has the website been updated?
- Do dates make a difference to the credibility of the information?
- Who is the author?
- Is the author's education or position listed?
- Can the author be contacted?
- What is the purpose of the website – informational? persuasive? solicitation? entertainment?
- Where does the information come from? Is it a reliable source?
- Is there a bibliography? Are correct citations made?

Information

- Is the information at a comfortable reading level for the student?
- Is there any misinformation on the site?
- Does the information appear to be valid?
- Is the same or similar information found on other websites?
- Do links provide relevant information?
- Is the information current?
- Are language conventions (e.g., spelling, grammar) used correctly?

Website Design

- Is the website attractive? Is it well laid out?
- Are there appropriate graphics on the webpage? Do they support the information?
- Is the information organized?
- Is there a site map to organize information?
- Is the site easy to navigate?
- Are links to other sites active?

Bias

- What is the purpose of this site?
- Does the author have a particular point of view? If so, is the author critical of the opposite point of view?
- Are opinions expressed? Does the information seem one-sided? Is there a hidden message?
- Are there examples of racial, cultural, faith or gender stereotyping in information, illustrations or graphics?
- Are all people and cultures respected?
- Is the information factual with references and links?

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Checklist for Evaluating Websites

Answer Yes, No or "?" to the following statements.

☐	The information in the website seems to be correct and can be found on other websites and in print materials.
☐	If there are pictures on the page, the pictures seem to be original and not edited.
☐	The information on this site helps me to answer my research question.
☐	The website has information that is up to date.
☐	The author of the website is identified and can be contacted.
☐	There are no examples of stereotyping (racial, cultural, faith or gender) found on the website.
☐	All people and cultures that are represented are depicted respectfully.
☐	The site is relatively free of bias.
☐	The information on the website is factual, and not an opinion expressed by the author.
☐	If a point of view has been expressed, the opposite point of view has also been presented in an impartial way.
☐	The website is attractive, well organized and has eye-catching visuals.
☐	Words are spelled correctly and the grammar is correct.
☐	All of the hyperlinks are working, well chosen and well organized.
☐	The website is easy to navigate and the home page can always be accessed.

URL: _____

*If you have answered "**Yes**" to all of the statements, this website may be useful to you.*
*If you have answered "**No**" to any of the statements, you need to consider whether this website will be of use to you.*
*If you have a "**?**", you should discuss the statement with a teacher or group member.*

What is the best part of this website?	**What would be the best way to find this website in the future?**
How could this website be improved?	**Describe how you might help a friend find similar information more quickly.**

Website Supports

Note: These websites were active at the time of writing.
Ensure that they are still active and appropriate before distributing.

The ABCs of Website Evaluation – Kathy Schrock	http://kathyschrock.net/abceval/index.htm
Adventures of Cyberbee – Linda C. Joseph	http://www.cyberbee.com/guides.html
The Media Awareness Network	http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/teachers/index.cfm
Evaluating Web Pages: Techniques to Apply & Questions to Ask – University of California at Berkeley Library	http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Evaluate.html
University of Wisconsin - Madison Libraries	http://www.library.wisc.edu/instruction/instmat/webeval.htm
ICYouSee – T Is For Thinking	http://www.ithaca.edu/library/Training/hott.html
The Quality Information Checklist	http://www.quick.org.uk/menu.htm
Evaluation Rubrics For Websites	http://www.siec.k12.in.us/~west/online/eval.htm
The Good, The Bad and The Ugly – Susan E. Beck	http://lib.nmsu.edu/instruction/eval.html
Graphic organizers	http://www.eduplace.com/kids/hme/k_5/graphorg/ http://www.graphic.org/ http://www.teach-nology.com/web_tools/graphic_org/ http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/students/learning/lr1grorg.htm http://www.teachervision.fen.com/lesson-plans/lesson-6293.html http://www.region15.org/curriculum/graphicorg.html
Information about search engines	http://eduscapes.com/tap/topic33.htm
Internet resources for literacy and learning developed by educators	http://web.syr.edu/~djleu/RTEACHER/rumphius.html
Search Strategies Page	http://www.noodletools.com/debbie/literacies/information/5locate/adviceengine.html

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Citing Website Sources

APA Style

See http://www.apastyle.org/elecgeneral.html for more information.

Author, A. A. (2000). *Title of work*.
Retrieved month day, year, from source.

Example:

Lamb, Annette. (Updated January 2004). *Search Tools for Kids, Teens, and Teachers.*
Retrieved July 28, 2004, from http://eduscapes.com/tap/topic33.htm

MLA Style

Author LastName, FirstName(s). "Title of Article." Title : Subtitle : Section of Page if appropriate.
Sponsoring/Publishing Agency, If Given Date of Electronic Publication or other Date, such as Last Updated.
Day Month Year of access <URL>

Example:
Lamb, Annette. "Search Tools for Kids, Teens, and Teachers."
Last Updated January 2004. July 28, 2004 <http://eduscapes.com/tap/topic33.htm>

Chicago/Turabian Style

LastName, FirstName(s). *Title of Article.* Sponsoring/Publishing Location : Agency,
If Given Date of Electronic Publication or other Date, such as Last Updated. Available on-line from URL. Accessed Day Month Year.

Example:
Lamb, Annette. *Search Tools for Kids, Teens, and Teachers.*
Last Updated January 2004. Available on-line from http://eduscapes.com/tap/topic33.htm
Accessed July 28, 2004.

Glossary of Website Terms

browser	a software program that allows you to view and access the text and picture resources on Internet Websites (i.e. Netscape Navigator, Microsoft Internet Explorer)
domain	the name which identifies each Internet site – the domain name points to only one machine/server on the Internet (i.e. www.gov.on.ca)
download	to transfer files or data from another computer to your own
Error 404	an error that is displayed in a browser when trying to access a page on a server that is not available
HTML	Hypertext Markup Language – the tagging language used to create hypertext documents for use on the World Wide Web (WWW)
hypertext	text, image, or other object that can be tagged to become a "link" (as in a chain) to retrieve another computer file (another Web page, image, sound file, or other document) on the Internet
IP Address/Number	Internet Protocol – a unique number consisting of 4 parts separated by dots (195.156.27.4) A machine needs an IP number to be on the Internet.
LAN	Local Area Network – a computer network that is limited to a specific area, usually within a building
ISP	Internet Service Provider – a company or organization that provides access to the Internet and its resources, usually for a fee
netiquette	manners/rules for interaction with other users of the Internet
search engine	a computer program on the Internet that allows you to find information/resources on the Internet
website	a location on the WWW with information, pictures etc – accessible using a Web browser
URL	Uniform Resource Locator - the address for a website – this address is made up of the domain name and sometimes directory/folder names and page/resource names (e.g. www.gov.on.ca/documents/index.htm).
WAN	Wide Area Network – a network that covers a larger (geographic) area

Developing and Organizing Ideas: Authoring a Website
Grades 7 - 9

The manner in which someone authors a good website closely parallels *the writing process* that students are often quite familiar with at an early age. Web pages have become another medium in which information and ideas, and their interconnections can be displayed easily and effectively.

Purpose
- Organize ideas in a meaningful way so that they may be displayed in a web page format.
- Identify relationships and links between important information.
- Allow students a creative way to display their writing.

Payoff
Students will:
- develop strategies to organize and link information around main ideas.
- effectively author websites.
- see that the *writing process* can be applied when authoring work in any format.

Tips and Resources
- *The Writing Process* for authoring a website is defined by the following steps:
    - **Planning** – the research, generation and organization of ideas related to a particular topic; create site maps on paper first
    - **Writing** – the creation of a working copy (let the ideas flow - revising and editing come later)
    - **Revising** – the adding, rearranging, removing and replacing of work in your drafts
    - **Editing** – looking over your own work and having peers and/or teachers provide feedback
    - **Publishing** – putting your work where all can see it
- Get ideas by *surfing* other comparable sites to plan what you would like to do.
- Exemplary websites:
    - **Identify** the author.
    - **List** the "last update".
    - **Include** accurate and up-to-date information, updated regularly.
    - **Present** pleasing use of colour, graphics, images and text.
    - **Display** easy to read content and contact info.
    - **Ensure** working links.
    - **Include a** table of contents and/or quick links.
    - **Link** to *relevant* sites!
    - Make a site **fun**, **captivating**, **inviting**, **original**, and **innovative**.
- To prepare for this activity:
    - **Ensure that students understand the importance of not using identifying information on websites such as their name, home address, telephone number or using pictures that might divulge such information through association.**
    - Review and follow Board Policy & Procedures for *Acceptable Use Policy*.
    - Create an overhead of a sample website.
    - Become familiar with website creation.
    - Ensure students understand netiquette rules.
- See Resource, "Web Design in Elementary Schools" in the Student/Teacher Resource, *Website Supports.*
- See Student Resource(s), *Author Checklist for Website Evaluation* and *Reflection Questions.*

Further Support
- Provide students with sample graphic organizers or access to graphic organizer software packages (such as *Smart Ideas*, licensed for use in Ontario schools by OSAPAC).
- There are many programs and web sites that provide tutorials on web page creation. See a short list in the Student/Teacher Resource, *Web Site Supports*.

Developing and Organizing Ideas: Authoring a Website

Grades 7 - 9

What teachers do	What students do
Before • Discuss ethical standards and plagiarism with the class before starting the process. • Provide assistance to students as they move into the initial stages of the authoring process. • Encourage students to independently research websites related to their theme. • Support students in evaluating websites.	**Planning:** • Review sites using **Gathering and Evaluating Information from World Wide Web Pages.** • Conduct research on websites. • Remember to use the "and kids": Boolean search term while doing research. See Student/Teacher Resource, *Website Supports*. • Determine a topic based on the assigned theme. • Determine the purpose of the site and the target audience (adults, peers or younger students). • Finalize a topic, subject or theme for the site. **Drafting:** • Create a mock-up of the web page. • Become familiar with a web page creation tool as assigned by teacher.
During • Provide time and opportunities for computer activities. Offer a rotating schedule within the classroom, if practical. • Check student website content for mechanical errors or omissions. • Check student websites for appropriate content. • Remind students of the need to properly cite any information used and provide an appropriate example. • Ensure that student website content meets safety and ethical standards. • Give opportunities for peer assessment and feedback. • Provide feedback.	**Writing:** • Provide completed research promptly. • Create a website using the initial mock-up. • Ensure that who, what, where, when, why, and how questions are answered. **Revising:** • Read over draft work to make sure that it is clear, concise and correct. • Submit a draft to peer-review. • Continue to review and revise based on input. • Submit a revised draft for teacher review. • Continue to review and revise your work. **Editing:** • Consider feedback from peers and teacher and incorporate where it will improve the quality of your work. **Publishing:** • Save pages in a place where they can be viewed.
After • Assign a debriefing reflection sheet, Student Resource, *Reflection Questions.* • Collect reflection sheets for portfolios.	• Complete Student Resource, *Author Checklist for Website Evaluation.* • Complete Student Resource, *Reflection Questions.*

**Designing a Web Page –
          5 Principles of Graphic Design**

1.   Proximity
   ➢   **Group** related items and **separate** unrelated items.
   ➢   Avoid disparate elements by maintaining chosen text, fonts and graphics.

2.   A l i g n m e n t
   ➢   Every item on the page should have a visual connection to something.
   ➢   Justify left, right or to the center.

3.   Contrast
   ➢   Use no more than two type faces or fonts. This is used to draw the eye to a particular element.
   ➢   Use italicized or an opposite or dramatically different colour.
        Typefaces:

T - Serif

Use this in the body of a text. The eye follows the feet and leads the eye to the next sentence.

T - Sans Serif
Use this for titles, as it is clean and clear.

4.   Repetition
   ➢   Repeat an aspect of the design throughout using consistent colour, font, style and design.

5.   Balance

   FORMAL   Uses the same **Bold** styles, formal fonts, balanced pages; uses symmetry and a traditional style of rules, bullets, colour, and design elements.

   `informal`   Includes asymmetric design elements, contrast and casual fonts. Creates a more modern style.

Student/Teacher Resource

Website Supports

Note: These websites were active at the time of writing.
Ensure that they are still active and appropriate before distributing.

Tools to help teachers create dynamic web pages for their students.	http://www.oswego.org/staff/cchamber/webdesign/edwebdesign.htm
Rubrics for assessing web pages. (may not conform with Ontario Ministry of Education standards)	http://www.essdack.org/tips/webpagerubric.html http://www.uwstout.edu/soe/profdev/webpagerubric.html http://edtech.sandi.net/rubric/ http://www.nisd.net/cmptecww/DeptWebSite/AdvCompTech/
Tutorial on Dreamweaver – a professional HTML editor licensed for use in Ontario schools.	http://www.macromedia.com/devnet/mx/dreamweaver/video_tutorials.html
Create a Website From Scratch	http://www.virtuallyignorant.com/website.htm
Web Design In Elementary Schools	http://dl.aace.org/14929
List of Technology Resource Sites	http://www.ocdsb.edu.on.ca/Teacher_Res/techres/software/sindex.htm

Author Checklist for Website Evaluation

☐ **Is the site's style relevant to the topic?**

☐ **Is it the best format for your project?**

☐ **Is your information reliable? Have you included a bibliography?**

☐ **Does your site reach the target audience?**

☐ **Has someone else edited the site for errors or omissions?**

☐ **Does your site meet the 5 principles of graphic design: proximity, alignment, contrast, repetition and balance?**

☐ **Is your site free of racial bias, ethno-cultural bias, gender bias, and violence? Does it present a balanced point of view?**

☐ **Have you respected copyright laws in terms of graphics and content?**

☐ **Did you view your page on a second computer?**

☐ **Are the links, content, visual appeal, and ease of navigation suitable?**

☐ **Is the date of your last update on the site?**

☐ **Have you included contact information, if appropriate?**

Reflection Questions

1. What were two problems you encountered during this project?

2. What would you do differently next time with another project?

3. Which skills do you want to improve?

4. Where else could you apply these skills?