



LESSON PLAN

Level:	Grades K to 3
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Duration:	45 minutes

So Many Choices!



This lesson is part of *USE, UNDERSTAND & ENGAGE: A Digital Media Literacy Framework for Canadian Schools*: <http://mediasmarts.ca/teacher-resources/digital-literacy-framework>.

Overview

This lesson introduces the students to the first steps in finding information on the Internet. Specifically, this lesson helps students understand the basic good practices of searching for something online: be accompanied by a trusted adult, start with a safe site and understand the use and power of using good links and keywords to find what they are looking for and to avoid bad results.

Learning Outcomes

Students demonstrate:

- knowledge of where to go to do safe searches online
- how to use links and keywords
- an understanding of the need for an adult presence when they go online

Preparation and Materials

Print copies of the *What's My Name Again?* handout for each student and bookmark the following sites:

- <https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/animals/>
- <http://www.kiddle.co>
- <https://www.kidzsearch.com/>
- <https://www.factmonster.com/>
- <https://bit.ly/kids-search>



Procedure

Introduction

Ask students: “Who here has looked for something on the Internet? Did you do it on your own or did you get help from someone like your older brother or your mom? How did you do the search?” (Depending on the age of the student, answers might include “On my Mom’s computer”, “my Dad’s phone” or “Google”.) Write the answers on the board. The list should have about five main ideas:

- Looked in a list of links
- Asked someone to help them find it (Mom, Dad, friend, other)
- Typed a keyword into a search engine
- Someone sent me a link or showed me how
- Asked a voice assistant like OK Google, Google Home or Alexa

Ask students if they know what a search engine is, and if they can give an example of one. Explain that a search engine is a website or app that searches the web to find websites that you’re looking for. The best-known search engine is Google. Voice assistants are similar to search engines but are made to also answer questions and do simple tasks if they’re connected to other things in your home

Ask “What kinds of things can you look for on the Internet?” (Answers should include games, photos, stories, music and videos. Write students’ answers on the board and add any missing items listed here.)

Finally, ask “When you looked for those things, did you have any problems finding them? Did you not get any results? Too many results? Did you have trouble explaining to your parents what you were looking for? What kinds of things were easier to find: videos, images, games, information?”

Safe clicking

Explain that the Internet is a great place to find lots of the things that are listed on the board, but that there are millions of things online so it’s often better to start with a list someone has already made for you.

This first activity is all about clicking on safe links to find information. Go to the site <https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/animals/> and demonstrate how to search for information about an animal by clicking on some of the links.

Explain that text and images on a page can be clicked on and lead them to more information: these are called “links.” One way to recognize them is when the mouse arrow turns into a pointing finger. Click on “Mammals”: you’ll move to another web page with entries about different kinds of mammals. Scroll down to the entry for “Brown Bear.” Explain to students that they can also open links in new tabs in their browsers so they don’t have to go backwards if they wind up in the wrong place. Show them how to open the Brown Bear link in a new tab:

- on a PC, right-click on the link and select “Open link in new tab”, or click it with the scroll wheel
- on a Mac, hold down Command while clicking
- on a Chromebook, click and hold the link, then drag it to up to your browser’s address bar



Point out the informational text on the Brown Bear and read it out to the students. Explain to the students that when they start with a site recommended by a trusted adult, it is generally safe to click on any link or image to look at the information it leads to.

Get me pictures, pictures of spiders!

Demonstrate again how to find an animal on the National Geographic Kids site and this time ask your students to suggest another animal category and animal. You may need to review some basics of how to scroll up and down a page, how to bookmark a page (and use them) and how to get back to a previous page in case a student accidentally clicks on a link leading to a different part of the site. As you progress through the search, encourage students to tell you what you need to do next.

After you have done this second search as a class, have students individually, in pairs or in groups find a picture of either a koala, a giraffe or a gray wolf using only the links on this page. Note: also make sure that the site is bookmarked on their computer or their device before they start the search (you may have to do this on each device) to be able to quickly come back to it if the students accidentally clicks away from the site.

Students will need to click a minimum of two links to find one of these animals. Since all three animals are listed under animal categories kids are unlikely to know, this will encourage them to explore the links on this page. For your reference, the koala is under “marsupials”, the giraffe is under “ruminants” and the gray wolf is under “dogs and foxes”. You may choose, as an optional activity to have children draw the animal they found from a print copy you made for them or draw it from the screen.

Finally, as a short reflection task, ask students to think about what was difficult about this task and which animals were harder to find and why. In pairs, ask students to list the steps they took to find the animals on the site and come up with steps they could take to find out more about the animals. Have each pair share their steps with the rest of the class (make sure to mention non-Internet steps such as looking in a book at the library if the students don’t bring it up).

A rose by any other name

Introduce the idea that there are some websites that allow people to type in what they are looking for and that these sites are called ‘search engines’. If possible, demonstrate a few searches on a large screen using one of the kid-friendly search engines (KidzSearch, Kiddle, FactMonster or MediaSmarts’ custom kids’ search engine – please note that some of these sites display ads). Explain that the words they type, also called ‘keywords’ (meaning that it’s an important word for what they are doing), is usually the name of the thing they are looking for. Have students suggest keywords and demonstrate a few more searches in front of the class. Make sure to do some searches that use multiple keywords and some more specific keywords. Reusing the example in Activity 1, you could illustrate the difference in results you get when you type “bear” versus when you type “sun bear”.

Explain that using more keywords is usually better and using more specific keywords is even better. Also explain (and demonstrate) that it is better to avoid using keywords with multiple meanings, such as “apple”.

Remind them that there are many different places where they can do a search like this online but that their searches should be done on a site recommended by an adult.



Find That Fruit

The point of this activity is to simulate what the kids will or should be doing at home: surfing with an adult but having some control as to what information they get from the Internet. Explain the following scenario: you went to your friend's birthday party and ate this fruit that you don't know the name of. Ask students if they know the name of a long yellow fruit that has a thick skin and is white inside. Once they tell you that they ate a banana, demonstrate how you could do the same thing on the Internet:

Do a search on KidzSearch or the Kids-Search custom search engine with the keyword 'banana'. Ask your students to notice how quickly you found what you are looking for (note: Wikipedia.org or foodreference.com are good sites to look for in your results list because of the pictures). Repeat this search but only with the descriptors of a banana (prompt your students to give you descriptors by asking them to describe its shape, its colour inside and its colour outside). Start with one keyword only, look at the results and repeat with each new keyword until you get an image of a banana. Make sure to point out to your students how much longer this took and all the irrelevant results you got before you had enough keywords compared to when you used only one specific keyword ('banana').

Distribute the handout (pictures of a carambola, a dragonfruit and a kiwi fruit).

For younger students: have your students suggest some keywords to find the name of the fruit. If one of the students knows the name, type it in and seize this opportunity to show how much easier it is to find something when you know what it's called. Have the students write down the name of each fruit on the sheet as you find them.

For older students: rather than doing the activity together as a class, assign students individually (or in pairs) to find the name of the fruits on their own and review their experiences and findings with the class once they are done.

Keywords used to find each fruit (results may vary):

Carambola (star fruit): fruit yellow green star. Source for the image http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Carambola_Starfruit.jpg

Pitaya (dragon fruit): fruit red outside white inside black dots. Source for the image http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Pitaya_cross_section_ed2.jpg

Kiwi: fruit green inside brown outside fuzzy (optional: if a student knows what this fruit is, discuss the results you get when you type in the keyword 'kiwi' (the fruit is not among the top five results) and that sometimes it's good to use more specific words even when you know the name of the thing you are looking for because sometimes more than one thing or person can have the same name). Source for the image: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Hardy-Kiwi-Comparison-3.jpg>

Closing/Review

Ask the following review question and make sure to go over any questions your students may have about these topics:

Now that you have done a few searches online, what are some things you can do to make sure that you find what you are looking for and avoid unwanted results? For example, what if you were looking for information on the Lego Batman video game? (Answers should include "use bookmarks", "start the search from a site that was recommended", "use good keywords", "ask an adult for help").



Extension: Wacky Media Songs

You may consider supplementing this lesson with the TVOntario Original Series *Wacky Media Songs*. These short videos explore a variety of digital media literacy topics. Here are a few suggested videos and discussion topics:

[Feed the Machine!](#) Internet search engines are super useful for looking up all kinds of stuff. But to get the best results, we have to feed the machine the right way. Ava's catchy song has tons of great tips on how to do that.

Before the video, ask: Can you think of any examples of search engines? (Google is the most well-known. In fact they may know what Google is but not that it's a search engine!) How do you think search engines work?

After the video, ask: What are some things you might like to look up with a search engine?

Why should you be careful to find just what you're looking for? (Search engines search the whole internet, so you might find a lot of things that aren't what you're interested in, including stuff you don't want to see.)

How could you use some of the tips in the video (like the minus sign or putting phrases in quotes) to help you find just what you're looking for?

How can you find out if somebody paid to have their search result come up first? (It'll have the word "Ad" - but you have to remember to look for it!)

[The Answers are Here!](#) While doing research for her homework, Ava is overwhelmed by all the information she finds online. Who's an expert, what's the most reliable source, what information can she trust? There's somewhere she can go to get everything she needs – the library!

Before the video, ask: What would you do if you had to find out something for a school project? Would it be different if you were looking for something you were interested in yourself, like getting a pet?

After the video, ask: What are some good things about getting information from the public library instead of the internet? When might the internet be a better choice?



What's My Name Again?



Name: _____



Name: _____



Name: _____

