USING APPROPRIATE RESOURCES

AGENDA

- Starter

- People, Places, and Things

- The Internet

- One Who Knows

- Conclusion

- Student Assessment

Objectives

Students will identify appropriate reference materials and resources.

Students will listen to a guest speaker in order to learn more about accessing information.

Materials Needed

- A device that can connect to the internet, a dictionary, and a textbook (Starter and Part I)

- A copy of an atlas and one or more volumes of an encyclopedia (Part I)

- A guest speaker who will spend 10 to 15 minutes telling students about sources of information and how to access them (If possible, have a school or public librarian talk about what resources are available to students at their library, how a library is organized, and how to use a card catalog or computer to find books.) (Part III)

Starter *(3 minutes)*

Display a device that can connect to the internet, a dictionary, and a textbook on your desk. Then, ask questions such as the following:

- Which of these three resources would you use to find out what movies are playing at your favorite theater? Why? (Students should say the laptop.)

- How else might you find out this information? (Students should say by calling the theater.)

- How would you know what number to call? (Students should mention looking the number up in the phone book or on the internet.)

Point out that it's important to be able to go to the right sources to get information. Say, "Today we will be examining ways to get the information you need."

Part I   People, Places, and Things *(15 minutes)*

Purpose: Students identify appropriate reference materials and resources.

1. Students recognize the importance of resources.

List the following topics on the board:

- What someone with nyctophobia suffers from

- Homework assignment for this class

- Northernmost country in South America

Tell students to imagine that they don't have internet access and must supply information about each of the topics on the board. Ask them if they can. Point out that students would need time to find out more about these topics in order to give answers. Explain that it would be unlikely that anyone knows all of these things offhand.

2. Students identify dictionaries and encyclopedias as resources.

Refer to the list on the board, and ask volunteers to tell which resource they would use to find out what a nyctophobe suffers from. (Students might respond: a dictionary or an encyclopedia.)

Through questions and comments, discuss these points with students:

In addition to spelling, identifying parts of speech, and definitions, a dictionary also gives information about places and people. All of the words in a dictionary are arranged in alphabetical order.

An encyclopedia is a collection of articles that give detailed facts and information about a variety of topics. The articles are arranged in alphabetical order within separate books, called volumes.

3. Students identify people as resources.

Refer to the list on the board. Ask students to tell how they would find out about the homework assignment for this class. (Students might respond: they wouldn't know; they would have to ask you, since the assignment hasn't been given.)

Emphasize that teachers, librarians, parents, classmates—anyone who has experience or knowledge to share—can be a resource. These are people who can answer students' questions and direct them to other resources.

4. Students identify atlases as resources.

Ask students what resource they would use to find out which is the northernmost country in South America. (Students should suggest using an atlas.) Through questions and comments, make sure that students can identify an atlas as a book with maps of states, countries, continents, and the world.

Invite students to look through the resources you've displayed and ask any questions they may have.

Part II   The Internet *(10 minutes)*

Purpose: Students examine computers and the internet as resources.

1. Students share information about the internet.

If it has not already been mentioned, point out that the internet is another source of information. Ask students to explain how they have previously used the internet. Encourage students to describe experiences other than visiting social networking sites or playing games.

Tell students that many places have internet access, either for free or for a nominal charge. If they do not have internet access at home, they can log on at a public library or a school computer lab.

2. Students learn to distinguish reliable sources of information on the internet.

Ask students, "How many of you have used the internet for research or school projects before? Why did you go to the internet for information?" Through discussion, guide students to the realization that there is information available online for almost any subject. Have students describe how they find information online. (Students should respond: use a search engine, visit a reliable site of which they are already aware.)

Tell students that the internet isn't always reliable. There are no editors on the internet, no one to ensure that the information posted to a site or message board is correct. Ask, "How can we know that the information we find online is reliable?" Allow students to offer some suggestions, and thenprovide them with the following tips for distinguishing between reliable/unreliable sources on the internet.

You may wish to have students write these tips down:

- Know the site you are visiting. If you're looking for information about careers, for example, be sure to visit a site dedicated to careers.

- Pay attention to the end of the site's address (e.g., ".com," ".gov," ".edu," ".org"). Usually, sites ending in ".gov," ".edu," or ".org" are reliable.
  However, you should always check to see who wrote the information on the site and judge if this person or organization is reliable.

- Look at the site's "About Us" section, if it has one. If the site describes the organization behind it and you feel that the organization is trustworthy, then the information is likely reliable. If it isn't clear who published the information, then it's probably not reliable.

- Look for grammar and spelling mistakes on the site. If the site is very poorly written, then it likely isn't reliable.

- Decide whether the site is trying to sell you something. Many websites are used by companies to sell products. If it seems that the information on the site is trying to get you to buy something, don't use that site for research.

- Remember that some online encyclopedias, like Wikipedia, can be edited by anyone. If you use a site like Wikipedia for research, be sure to double-check the information.

Say to students, "Making sure that the sources you find online are reliable is very important." Explain that when students are performing research online, they should always back up their information with print sources, like books or news articles.

Part III   One Who Knows *(20 minutes)*

Purpose: Students listen to a guest speaker in order to learn more about accessing information.

1. Prepare your guest speaker.

Prior to class, explain to your speaker the purpose of their visit and the time limit. Emphasize that your speaker should focus on what resources are available to students and who can help students utilize these resources, in addition to discussing how to use these resources. Have your guest decide whether to entertain questions during or after the presentation. Suggest that your guest give some personal background before getting into the body of the presentation.

2. Students listen and respond to the presentation.

Introduce your speaker to the class. Suggest that students take notes. If your speaker has elected to answer questions during the presentation, monitor the time in order to assist your guest in completing the presentation.

After the presentation, invite students to ask any questions they may have or to share their thoughts about what they have learned.

Conclusion *(2 minutes)*

Ask students to name resources they can use to get information. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- It's important to go to the right sources to get the information you need.
- You can get information from reference books, people, and the internet.
- You can find reference books and use computers in libraries.

Student Assessment

1. List three situations in which you would need to look up information.

2. List five resources that can help you get information about people, places, or things. Explain the advantages and disadvantages of each resource.

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Using Quotations

"Research is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose."

As a class, discuss the importance of maintaining focus on a topic while performing research. Have students brainstorm what might happen if they do not keep their topics in mind while researching.

Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

Divide students into teams. Have them locate the answers to 20 trivia questions of your own creation, citing where they found the answer to each question.

Have teams report on their successes. The team with the most correct answers wins. You might also honor teams for ingenious research ideas or collaborative strategies. Discuss the most used and the most effective sources.

Writing in Your Journal

Have students select and research a topic in which they are interested. Have them keep a log of their research (with dates, sources consulted, phone numbers, etc.), just as professional researchers do. (Note that they should always be able to retrace their steps if they need more details.)

Have students discuss their efforts in small groups. Have them identify the strategies that were most efficient, yielded the best information, etc.

Using Technology

Have students query their favorite search engines (e.g., Bing, Yahoo, Google) about a topic. Then, have them sift through the results to filter the reliable sites from the unreliable ones.

Have students discuss which characteristics helped them filter their results.

Homework

Have students choose a resource to investigate (e.g., atlas, dictionary, encyclopedia, thesaurus, newspaper, magazine, the internet, other people).

Have students create "advertisements" showing the different advantages of the resources they've chosen.

Additional Resources

Have students speak to parents and community members about resources specific to their fields (e.g., TV crews rely on local production guides, maps, contact lists).

Have students create a class chart listing examples of career-specific resources.