

HOW STUDENTS USE THE WEB

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Research - elementary students find information written at their level

Almost unimaginable amounts of information are available on the World Wide Web. Global computer networks act as a vast distributed electronic library of all levels and subjects. Only a small part of that information is useful, interesting, and suitable in content and level for elementary age children.

Searching for information online can be very time-consuming and frustrating for children, but sites do exist that present information appropriate for elementary student research.

★ indicates a top pick for starting student researchers.

- <http://www.askforkids.com/>

★ *Ask for Kids.*

A user enters words of a question, then Ask interprets and responds with “Where can I find out about ___”. If this question accurately states your query, then you click on a site with an answer rather than selecting from a long list of links. The found site appears as a frame within Ask for safe surfing, but is not necessarily at an appropriate level. Pop-up choices cover multiple meanings but can be quite off the topic. Better for inquisitive exploring than for a specific research need. Additional reference “books” menu on the opening screen for dictionary, thesaurus, almanac, atlas, biography. News sources list. Targets middle school and younger.

- <http://www.bjpinchbeck.com/healthandpe.html>

BJ Pinchbeck's Homework Helper.

Over 780 recommended safe sites are grouped by subject areas. K-12, not specific to elementary. B.J. (now 21) first started a homework help site in 1996 with the aid of his father and it has remained a popular site through various makeovers.

- <http://www.factmonster.com/index.html>

Fact Monster.

Facts for the day under Daily Features. For other facts, navigate either by clicking on a subject or enter a keyword search. A search accesses almanacs, dictionary, and encyclopedia; or the user can select each of these directly as well as an atlas. Excellent Help section answers a lot of questions you may not have even thought to ask. Grades 3-8.



- <http://www.geocities.com/EnchantedForest/Tower/1217/index.html>

4th and 5th Grade Student Research Resources.

Virtual library of links arranged by subjects comprising the intermediate level curriculum.

Awkward to use for research on a specific topic and entering a term in the search box won't help. Some dead links. Links at bottom of page to related collections for other grade levels take you out of this intermediate grade site. Bee Tip: The genealogy is mostly either dead links or above the need of this age level, but there are a few things you can adapt for a family history study. grades 4-5

- <http://www.rcls.org/ksearch.htm>

Kid's Search Tools.

Input boxes to help conduct a search of kid-safe sites. Three sections: find a word, find basic information, find a web site. Useable by students as young as grade 3 with initial instruction. Gives access to some of the other reference sites listed here. grades 3 and up

- <http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/KidsClick!/>

★ *KidsClick.*

A web guide and student search engine prepared by librarians. Search by clicking on a topic, for a subject by initial letter, or enter a keyword in a simple or advanced search. Results of matching sites are listed alphabetically by site name and the description includes reading level. KidsClick is a guide to quality sites, not a filter. Maintained. Simpler to use than the Yahoo!igans Search Engine. Search by Dewey number at <http://www.kidsclick.org/dewey.html> grades k-7

- <http://teacher.scholastic.com/researchtools/index.htm>

Scholastic - Research Tools.

Select from social studies or science topics for articles from the Article Archive of Scholastic magazines and answers to typical questions of children. Bee Tip: Links in the introductory paragraph just lead to information about the magazines. grades 3-8

- <http://homework-help.aol.com/>

Study Buddy.

The screenshot shows the AOL Research & Learn Study Buddy website. At the top, there's a blue header with 'AOL Research & Learn'. Below that is a large orange banner with 'STUDY★BUDDY.COM' and the tagline 'A free search engine built just for homework'. A green navigation bar contains links for HOME, BACKPACK, GAMES, LEARNING SERVICES, PARENTS, TEACHERS, SETUP, and HELP. Below the navigation bar, it says 'You are here: StudyBuddy'. The main content area has a green search bar with a 'Search' button and a 'HOMEWORK APPROVED SOURCES' seal. To the left, there's a section titled 'I Search ... Do You?' with a photo of a woman and text about how StudyBuddy makes homework easier. To the right, there's a 'MY BACKPACK' section with links for 'Saved Items (0)', 'Activities & Games (0)', and 'Set up Backpack now'. On the far right, there's a vertical menu with icons and links for Math, Language, Art & Music, Science, Social Studies, and Health. At the bottom left, there's a 'Check it Out!' section with links for 'K-2 | 3-5 | 6-8 | 9-12' and 'Learn More'. At the bottom right, there's a 'Popular Searches' section with links for 'Frogs', 'Hurricanes', 'Math Games', and 'Sharks'.

Specialized search engine for hundreds of thousands of sites approved by teacher and librarian reviewers. Enter keyword search or browse subject by clicking to narrow topic. Can target search by level: k-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12. Results are summarized by categories with the number in each: articles & books, audio & video, photos & maps, activities & games, web sites, family library. As you browse the results list, you can click to save any item in your backpack. The search terms are temporarily saved and you can store them permanently in your backpack. Other features: news from Time for Kids, dictionary, thesaurus, atlas, language translator, instant message Study Buddy (AOL or AIM Buddy list) for homework help. grades k-12

- http://www.tooter4kids.com/classroom/themes_on_line.htm

Themes-On-Line.

Articles and reports developed at a second grade level for student research. Scroll down the page to get to the topics box. The Index choice that you see first is an index to the complete site, and gets you away from the research themes. grade 2

- <http://www.wordcentral.com/>

WordCentral.

Click on Dictionary to locate a word in the Merriam-Webster online student dictionary. Also Build Your Own Dictionary, Daily Buzzword, and various code-type word games. Interesting Rhyming Dictionary in the Music Room for a poetry study. ("Select Destination" pull-down menu) grades 3-7

- <http://kids.yahoo.com/>

Yahoo! Kids.

Yahoo! Kids is the makeover of Yahoo!igans web directory. The directory is still there by entering a keyword search, but the "features" overwhelm the research uses. Features cover games, science, entertainment, recreation. Referred sites from a search are screened for content and appropriateness. Reference resources are referred to in the Help section, but the only reference tools currently available are a dictionary and encyclopedia (under Studyzone button). Merry Bee has downgraded this revised site from an Excellent reference choice to a Good. The site is better for browsing and is rated as an Excellent choice in that context. grades 3-6

Send comment or corrections to mberry@merrybee.info