

AUSTRALIA'S WORLD HERITAGE PLACES

Extension Lesson 2: Internet Critical Literacy

Years 7 - 10



Objectives: Students gain an understanding of the importance of Internet Critical Literacy and how to apply this kind of thinking to their research.

Topics covered: What is truth, how do we know something is true?
Why it is important to question the validity and reliability of information we find on the internet?

Curriculum focus: Research skills development **Lesson duration:** minimum 1 x 50 minutes

Resources:

Students will need access to the following websites:

Evaluating information found on the internet: www.library.jhu.edu/researchhelp/general/evaluating/

Evaluating Web Pages: Techniques to Apply & Questions to Ask <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Evaluate.html>

Students will need access to the internet for the second part of the lesson.

Activities:

Initiate a class discussion with the following questions. Ask students to justify and explain their answers:

- What do we mean by 'true'?
- Introduce the notions of 'objective' and 'subjective' truth. That one person's truth may vary from another's.
- Looking at history, is it possible for two people's version of the truth to be correct at the same time?
- Can something really be true to one person but not to another? Explain how?
- If something is on the news or in a newspaper is it true and how can we tell?
- Do you believe everything you hear on TV? Why/why not?
- Is information in a book always true? What is involved in having a book published and can anyone do it? (yes and no)
- If it's on the internet does it mean it's true? Can anyone be published on the internet?
Could you write something and have it published on the internet? (YES!!)
- Consider the amount of people who now have blogs and MySpace sites – can they write whatever they want on these?
- Why would someone put information on the internet that wasn't true?
(It could be a biased or uninformed opinion. They may have an agenda, either for personal gain, political, religious or financial reasons etc. The person may not have conducted adequate research or perhaps they've tried too hard to simplify something complex. Perhaps they didn't intend for the information to be taken seriously).
- Are there regulations to stop this? ('netiquette').
 - In pairs, ask students what criteria they use to judge a website's credibility?
(maybe they don't and just use anything... hopefully after the class discussion they can come up with a few ideas)
 - Students can improve their skills in searching via google by reading their search tips found at: www.google.com.au/help/

Students should choose three websites and apply www.lib.umd.edu/guides/webcheck.html in order to evaluate these sites.

- Students should print, or copy down the questions on this worksheet or bookmark the site so they can use it in future.

Extension activities

- Have students devise and teach a short class in Internet Critical Literacy to another class at their year level or a younger class.
- From what they have learnt, have students devise their own evaluation checklist. This could be put up in a computer lab or the library.



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