

## LESSON PLAN 34: WORKING WITH WEBQUESTS

**Objective:** Identify, design and implement an online research topic for your students

**Age range:** 8-18

### WHAT IS A WEBQUEST?

This is an investigative activity in which most or all of the information is found by students on the Internet.

### WHY DO THEM?

There's an awful lot of information out there on the World Wide Web. WebQuests allow the use of this amazing and powerful resource in a challenging but controlled fashion (you can set the limits of investigation). And, let's face it, going online to find and collect information can be an engaging and effective alternative (or even replacement) for 'read-the-chapter-and-complete-the-review' style assignments.

Here we look at the basics for creating WebQuests for your class.

### YOU WILL NEED

Computer and Internet access. Topics for investigation. Selected websites.

### DEVELOPING SKILLS

Investigation, following instructions, identifying relevant resources and information, assessing the value and veracity of online material, problem-solving, presentation, Internet safety, and teamwork.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

How to effectively and safely use the Internet for investigative purposes. Interpreting and presenting research results.

### METHOD

1. Do your own research – ultimately, the quality of the WebQuest depends on the thought you put in.

- ▶ *What do you want students to learn?*
- ▶ *Why is this information important?*
- ▶ *Where does it fit into your teaching?*

You'll obviously need to determine the topic and scope of the investigation, as well as decide on its duration, whether it's for individuals or teams, and the outcomes you expect. Also, make it age and ability appropriate – there's everything from nursery rhymes to PHD papers online, so ensure you hit the right level.

2. Create your Quest – you'll need to devise the 'road map'. This is the list of websites that you want your students to visit. It should also explain the purpose of the WebQuest and general instructions for its completion, such as space for any answers or a presentation of what's been learned, if required.

How you structure your Quest is up to you. It could simply be a 'hunt' for answers to questions. You may want a slideshow on a subject, or an essay, which is to be backed up by facts students have found – or a mix of these ... or something else entirely. It's up to you.

Always remember:

- ▶ Make sure the websites you choose are appropriate and trusted, fun, visually appealing, and provide a range of approaches and perspectives;
- ▶ Good WebQuests are easy to follow, without a lot of tedious mouse-work or jumping back and forth between sites; and
- ▶ Throw in a few resources for high-ability students, as well as those with limited abilities.

3. Find a 'hook' – many WebQuests have a competitive element that motivates the participants, like collecting pieces of information or solving a puzzle. The student or team that's quickest or has most details then becomes the winner.

4. Present your WebQuest – Of course, you can provide it on paper but you might like to try posting it online (on a website, blog or wiki) or present it through any number of multimedia, such as a YouTube video. It all adds to the fun.

5. Observe and develop your WebQuest – monitor how it goes, the good bits and those that aren't so good. Don't expect the results to be perfect first time – it may take a little tweaking to get right.

6. Lastly, a word of warning. If the computer/network or websites are down have a Plan B. It's probably also a good idea to check your chosen sites a few hours before using them.

### FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

If your students want more – give them more! Find additional sites or higher level content, or change the scope of the investigation.

Include offline activities, such as reading books / magazines / newspapers, interviewing, or physically collecting information or materials. (If it's a geology-related quest, they may need to collect rocks, for example.)

### USEFUL LINKS

Try these sites for further information and advice:

- [www.webquest.org](http://www.webquest.org)
- [www.work.co.nz/reviews/webquests.asp](http://www.work.co.nz/reviews/webquests.asp)
- <http://questgarden.com/>
- [www.bestwebquests.com/](http://www.bestwebquests.com/)
- [www.techtrekkers.com/webquests/](http://www.techtrekkers.com/webquests/)
- <http://zunal.com/>

Or watch this YouTube video tutorial explaining the activity.  
<http://webquestvideo.notlong.com>

### WHAT ARE SURREAL QUESTS?

These are where a WebQuest meets the virtual world of communication available in Second Life. See some examples at [www.avatarlanguages.com/podcasts.php](http://www.avatarlanguages.com/podcasts.php)

