

Understanding and evaluating online searches



LESSON OBJECTIVE

- ▶ Understand that popularity and reliability are two key concepts to consider when searching for and choosing online sources
- ▶ Create checklists with criteria for evaluating search results that they can use in their own role as researchers and seekers of information



- ▶ **ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS**
 - ▶ How can people discern what is a reliable source on the internet among many possible search results?



- ▶ **AGE**
 - ▶ 11-14 years old



- ▶ **MATERIALS**
 - ▶ Paper
 - ▶ Pens or pencils
 - ▶ Copies of “Sample Google Search” Handout



- ▶ **PREPARATION**
 - ▶ Print one handout per student



- ▶ **ISTE DIGCITCOMMIT COMPETENCY**
 - ▶ INFORMED: I evaluate the accuracy, perspective and validity of digital media and social posts.



SUPPORT MATERIALS

Visit [facebook.com/fbgetdigital](https://www.facebook.com/fbgetdigital) to access resources for parents and young people that can complement the lesson students took on Foundations today.



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LESSON OVERVIEW

In the age of Google and other search engines, this lesson aims to help students navigate how information comes to them through online search tools. Students will evaluate a Google search result, distinguishing between popularity and reliability among the results. In the form of checklists, they will create a tool to independently discern which sources are most legitimate and relevant as they engage in their own research.

PROCEDURE

1. Put students into small groups and give them copies of the “Sample Google Search” Handout. Ask students to rank results from most to least reliable. As a class, define the term reliability on the board.
2. Have student groups report out their ranking and explain why they ranked certain sources the way they did.
3. Create a t-chart on the board with the headings “Reliable Source” and “Unreliable Source.” Based on students’ rankings, place each source from the search examples into the appropriate column. Document the reasons the students provided for their rankings.
4. Reveal that the handout illustrates how search results actually appear—not in order of reliability but prioritized based on a variety of factors, including popularity, location and search history.
5. Ask students to find a partner and together create a checklist for evaluating search results.
6. Have students share out their checklist items and compile a class list. Distinguish between checklist items that must be checked and checklist items that may be checked (for example, the website may end in .edu or the website must not state an opinion in its title).
7. Checklists might include, but shouldn’t be limited to, the following criteria:
 - ▶ What kind of website or page is this? (Personal blogs, discussion forums and advice columns aren’t typically reliable sources.)
 - ▶ Is the website connected to an educational institution or organization?
 - ▶ Is the website from a fact-checked news source I have heard of such as The Associated Press or the Washington Post?
8. If certain key criteria do not come up in the class discussion, bring up additional checklist items for students to consider and explain their importance.
9. Ask students to reflect in their notebooks on the following questions: Why do you think search results are not organized solely by reliability? Why is having a reliability checklist important? How has this activity changed the way you will approach search results online?

VOCABULARY

algorithm [al-guh-rith-uhm] (noun) a process or set of rules to be followed in calculations or other problem-solving operations, especially by a computer

search algorithm [surch al-guh-rith-uhm] (noun) the mathematical process by which the search engine calculates a response typed into the search bar

reliability [ri-lahy-uh-bil-i-tee] (noun) the quality of being trustworthy

popularity [pop-yuh-lar-i-tee] (noun) the state or condition of being liked, admired or supported by many people

Sources:

Google Dictionary

[merriam-webster.com](https://www.merriam-webster.com)

[en.oxforddictionaries.com](https://www.oxforddictionaries.com)

tolerance.org/classroom-resources/tolerance-lessons/understanding-and-evaluating-online-searches



Sample Google Search

Below you will find search results from a Google search of “cell phone affects teens.” As a team, rank these sources from most to least reliable and prepare an explanation of how and why you sorted the results as you did.

How Do Cell Phones Negatively Affect the Health of Teens...

[livestrong.com](#) > Parenting

Aug 13, 2015 - Cell phones are an addiction for many teens. From sleep deprivation to texting and driving, cell phones present a health hazard for teens who...

7 Negative Effects Of Mobile Phones On Teenagers | MomJunction

[momjunction.com](#) > Early Teen > Safety

Jan 6, 2017 - Are cell phones really a good thing for teens? What are the negative effects of mobile phones on teenagers? Read here to regulate your teen...

Cell phones: Physical effects on teenagers | The Composition of...

[openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/the-composition-of-happiness-f2014/2014/11/24/cell-phones-physical-effects-on-teenagers](#)

Nov 24, 2014 - Many studies have been done on teenagers to show how cell phones effect teenagers physical health. ... Young teens who get to use their phones more are more restless, careless lifestyles, disrupted sleep, more stress and fatigue and etc. As stated in the article, “Addiction to cell phones is becoming common.”

Examining the Effects of Mobile Phones on Kids and Teens | HuffPost

[huffpost.com/entry/examining-the-effects-of-mobile-phones-on-kids-and-teens_b_8633658](#)

Nov 27, 2015 - Researchers are investigating the effects RF EMF (radiofrequency electromagnetic field) exposure from mobile phones on the sleep, brain patterns and cognitive function of children ages 10-18. The RF EMF emissions from mobile phones and other technology have been examined in adults, but never before in children.

What do mobile phones do to teenage brains? | CBS News

[cbsnews.com/news/what-do-mobile-phones-do-to-teenage-brains](#)

May 20, 2014 - Biggest study of its kind will research the impact of cell phone technology on developing brains, memory and attention.



Sample Google Search

Mobile phones and teenagers: Impact, consequences and concerns...

unitec.researchbank.ac.nz/handle/10652/1270

by S Ravidchandran - 2009 - Cited by 4 - Related articles. Background: It is a common sight—cell phones (mobile phones) in the hands of people, especially teenagers. Literature has provided in-depth evidence of the...

Teen Cell Phone Addiction | PsychGuides.com

psychguides.com/guides/teen-cell-phone-addiction

Learn the signs and symptoms of teenage cell phone addiction, how to help a teen overcome their addiction and the effects it can have on them.

Parents' Guide to Teens and Cell Phones | CHLA

chla.org/blog/rn-remedies/parents-guide-teens-and-cell-phones

Cell phone problems arise with teens, often resulting in feuds between... and could have a devastating and life-threatening effect on the person being bullied.

5 Truths About Teens and Screens: Effects of TV, Cell Phones...

fit.webmd.com/teen/recharge/article/teens-screen-time

Most teens spend a lot of time in front of a TV, computer or cell phone screen—and that affects mood, grades, physical health and outlook. WebMD offers...