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Research it @ your school library!

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Lanell Rabner is the Librarian at Springville High School, Springville Utah. This is her third year as a School Librarian. She spent 10 years as an Academic Librarian at Brigham Young University and a Public Reference Librarian in Columbus, Georgia prior to that.

Reference, instruction and research are her primary areas of expertise, having served as Head of Reference for the Columbus, Georgia Public Library System, Periodicals Department Chair at BYU, and the Electronic Resources Librarian at BYU. Lanell has taught research strategies and methodologies at BYU in the Graduate Nursing Department and the Law School, as well as in the Freshman English Honors program. She also served on the Utah Academic Library Consortium where major decisions are made regarding the Pioneer Database suite.

Research it @ your library!

STEP 1: DEFINE THE PRODUCT

- Format – written paper, annotated bibliography, PowerPoint, poster, etc.
 - Type of paper – informational, argumentative (persuasive), or analytical
 - Length
 - Audience
 - Structure – works cited page, type of in-text documentation, style format, graphs, illustrations, charts, etc.
 - Information needed – historical, current, facts, opinion, etc.
 - Acceptable sources – reference books [to include encyclopedias], book sources, periodicals [to includes print or electronic], newspapers, interviews, web sites, etc.
 - Grading rubric / evaluation criteria
 - Review this process
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STEP 2: IDENTIFY AND DEVELOP YOUR TOPIC

- State your topic as a question
 - Identify the main concepts or keywords in your question
 - If you are having trouble identifying your keywords, ask the librarian or your teacher
 - Test your main concepts or keywords
 - Look them up in the appropriate background sources
 - Use them as search terms in the library catalog and in the Utah Pioneer Library or your school's online subscription databases
 - If you find too much information, narrow your search
 - If you find too little information, broaden your search
 - Review this process
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STEP 3: FIND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- Look up your keywords in the index volume of a general or subject-specific encyclopedia
- Encyclopedia articles are written by experts in the field – look for books and articles written by those experts
- Search out books and articles listed at the end of the encyclopedia article
- Additional background information may be found in your textbooks or lecture notes
- Background sources **ARE NOT** included on your works cited page – this is common knowledge, **NOT** research – it gives you an overview of your topic and can help you identify your keywords and main concepts, as well as the authorities in the field
- Review this process

STEP 4: USE LIBRARY CATALOGS TO FIND RESOURCES

- Search your school library catalog
- Search your public library catalog
- If appropriate, search your local college or university library catalog
- Use a **KEYWORD** search for a narrow or complex search topic – **IN MOST CASES THIS IS THE PREFERRED TYPE OF SEARCH**
- Use a **SUBJECT** search for a broad subject
- **BROWSE** the shelves where you found your books, looking for similar things you may have missed in your initial catalog search
- Look for your keywords in the table of contents [in the front of the book] and the index [in the back of the book] of the books
- When using the library catalog, note the library location of the books you find
 - Ref means it is a reference book – it can not be checked out and it is located on the library's references shelves
 - Books with Dewey Decimal call numbers are located in the library's non-fiction book stacks
 - F or Fic means it is a fiction book – generally not appropriate for your research paper
- If you can't find your keywords in the library catalog or need help locating a book on the shelf – **ASK THE LIBRARIAN**
- Review this process

STEP 5: USE ONLINE DATABASES TO FIND PERIODICAL [MAGAZINE] OR NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

- Utah Pioneer Library
- Your school's subscription online databases
- Compile your keywords before you begin searching
- Plan your search strategy before you begin searching
- If you need help – **ASK THE LIBRARIAN**
- Review this process

STEP 6: FIND INTERNET RESOURCES

- Internet sites **MUST BE APPROVED** by your teacher
- Use search engines to locate materials on the web
 - Google – ★★
 - Alta Vista
 - Ask.com
 - Excite
 - Hotbot
 - Lycos
 - Wisenut
 - Metacrawler – multi-engine search

- Vivisimo - multi-engine search
 - Use the web sites identified by your teacher
 - Use the web sites identified by the librarian
 - If you need help – **ASK THE LIBRARIAN**
 - Review this process
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STEP 7: EVALUATE WHAT YOU FIND

- Evaluate the quality of the books, periodicals and web sites you've found
 - Is it relevant to your topic?
 - Is the information accurate?
 - Is the author reputable?
 - Is the publication reliable? Does it include footnotes, credits, a bibliography or works cited, quotations?
 - How objective is it? Does objectivity matter? Have you examined both sides of the issue?
 - How current is it?
 - If you found too many or too few sources, you may need to refine your search by narrowing or broadening your topic
 - Review this process
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STEP 8: CITE WHAT YOU FIND USING A STANDARD FORMAT

- Give credit where credit is due – cite your sources
 - Cite direct quotes
 - Cite paraphrased information
 - Use the style format your teacher has given you
 - Use Citation Machine – <http://pinetlibrary.com/cm/index.php> [Free access]
 - MLA Style guide - Gibaldi, Joseph. **MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers**. 6th ed. New York: MLA, 2003. [for Humanities papers]
 - **Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association**. 5th ed. Washington: American Psychological Association, 2001. [for Social Science papers]
 - Citation Styles - <http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/online/citex.html>
 - Review this process
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STEP 9: CREATE AND PRESENT THE PRODUCT

- Organize
 - Revise and edit
 - Present findings – as defined in Step #1
 - Demonstrate appropriate audience behavior for oral presentations
 - Review this process
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STEP 10: EVALUATION

- Evaluate your product
 - Evaluate your research procedures and skills
 - Review this process
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- PubMed Bookshelf [National Library of Medicine] - <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?db=books>
- PubMed Central [U.S. National Institutes of Health] - <http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/>
- Religion Online - http://www.lib.byu.edu/resource/social/pol_sci/plscweb/polls.htm
- Religions of the World - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/>
- SearchGov - <http://www.searchgov.com/>
- Smithsonian Institution Online Collection - <http://www.sil.si.edu/digitalcollections/>
- Speeches - <http://lii.org/pub/subtopic/4758>
- Sports Rules - http://www.everyrule.com/sports_az_list.html
- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy - <http://plato.stanford.edu/>
- State and Local Government on the Net - <http://www.statelocalgov.net/index.cfm>
- THOMAS Legislative - <http://thomas.loc.gov/>
- United Nations Homepage - <http://www.un.org/>
- Utah Demographic and Economic Data - <http://www.governor.state.ut.us/dea/>
- Utah Health Net - <http://utahealthnet.org/>
- Victorian Web - <http://www.victorianweb.org/>
- Victorian Women Writers Project - <http://www.indiana.edu/~letrs/vwwp/>
- Virtual Religion Index - <http://virtualreligion.net/vri/>
- Women Past & Present - <http://www.distinguishedwomen.com/>

Web Page Evaluation Criteria

Whenever using a web page for your research project, it is critical to evaluate the source of the information you intend to use. Remember – there are no internet police - anyone can post anything on the internet. There are no rules as to accuracy, credibility or reliability of the information. This means you must carefully **READ, EVALUATE, AND CHECK THE SOURCE.**

1. Currency – Is the web page current?
 - a. What date was it written?
 - b. What date was it put up on the web?
 - c. What date was it last revised?

2. Authority – Is the web page authoritative?
 - a. Who is responsible for the page's content?
 - b. What are the author's qualifications?
 - c. Are the author's credentials posted?
 - d. Who is the sponsoring organization?
 - e. What are the sponsoring organizations qualifications?
 - f. Are other sources cited?

3. Accuracy – Is the information thorough, accurate, clearly labeled and organized?
 - a. Is the page detailed and comprehensive?
 - b. Where appropriate, is the information current?
 - c. Does the page say where it got its information?
 - d. Does the page link to reputable outside sources?
 - e. Is the page in good taste?
 - f. Does the page use correct spelling and grammar?

4. Treatment – Is the page objective?
 - a. Does the page present information with a minimum of bias?
 - b. Is the bias easily recognized?
 - c. Is the page fair, balanced and reasonable?
 - d. Does the page contain a conflict of interest? [Advertisements?]

5. What to watch for:
 - a. Statements that go against common sense
 - b. Check for words that are made up or nonsensical
 - c. Pictures that do not make sense
 - d. Images that look like they've been altered
 - e. Irony or satire in the text
 - f. Exaggeration in the text
 - g. Sites that look official, but are not
 - h. Total nonsense
 - i. A clear, clutter-free, sensible layout that facilitates ease of finding relevant information. Are the links easy to identify?

Evaluate your Web Source

Name: _____

Date: _____

Name of website: _____

Web address (URL): _____

Authority: The site should provide information about the author's expertise and how to contact him or her.

Who is the author, and what are his/her qualifications?

What organization sponsored the web page?

Objectivity: A credible site will present objective information.

Is the information objective? Why or why not?

Timeliness: Good websites should include a date that indicates the site has current, recently updated information.

What is the date listed as the most recent update?

Accuracy: The information presented in the site should be accurate and verifiable.

How do you know that the information is accurate?

CHECK THE FOLLOWING:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Site follows common sense | <input type="checkbox"/> No irony or satire in text |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No nonsensical words | <input type="checkbox"/> No exaggeration in text |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pictures make sense | <input type="checkbox"/> Isn't falsely official-looking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Photos don't look altered | |

LOOK AT THE URL – WHAT TYPE OF DOMAIN IS IT?

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial | <input type="checkbox"/> Organization | <input type="checkbox"/> Government |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Network | <input type="checkbox"/> Educational |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non-U.S. | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE WEB PAGE?

- | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Information/Facts | <input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment | <input type="checkbox"/> Propaganda | <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial site |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advise | <input type="checkbox"/> Opinion | <input type="checkbox"/> News |

WHO ARE THE INTENDED USERS OF THIS WEB-PAGE?

- | | | |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Subject Expert | <input type="checkbox"/> School Student | <input type="checkbox"/> Lay Person |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|

WILL THE RESOURCE SATISFY THE NEEDS OF THE INTENDED USERS?

- Yes No

DOES THE SOURCE PROVIDE A BIBLIOGRAPHY, FOOTNOTES OR IN-TEXT DOCUMENTATION FOR SUPPORT?

- Yes No

IS THE INFORMATION CONSISTENT WITH INFORMATION PROVIDED IN OTHER SOURCES?

- Yes No

ARE THERE WORKING LINKS TO OTHER SOURCES OF RELATED CONTENT?

- Yes No