Google™ ISN'T ALWAYS THE GREATEST!

Locating and Accessing Information using Databases for
Gov. Thomas Johnson High School Students

(Step 3 in the BIG 6 research process: Finding What You Need)

PURPOSE: This activity exposes you to many different electronic resources called databases. When you are gathering information, it may be better to use databases or online indexes instead of traditional search engines such as Google.

*Databases or online indexes provide these benefits:*

1. Information may be found quicker and easier because of how it is organized.
2. Information may be more accurate and reliable because it comes from sources that have evaluated and authenticated.
3. Databases tend to have better reputations so your information may be more credible.
4. Databases can be accessed at home or other places where internet is available.

MATERIALS:

1. This paper, obviously!
2. Writing utensil
3. Working internet connection/computer (you may have to share)
4. Activity sheet (either separate or at the end of this oacket)
5. Your brain shifted into search, find and evaluate mode

PREVIEW: Look at how you can access these informational tools from any computer, even if you are not at school.
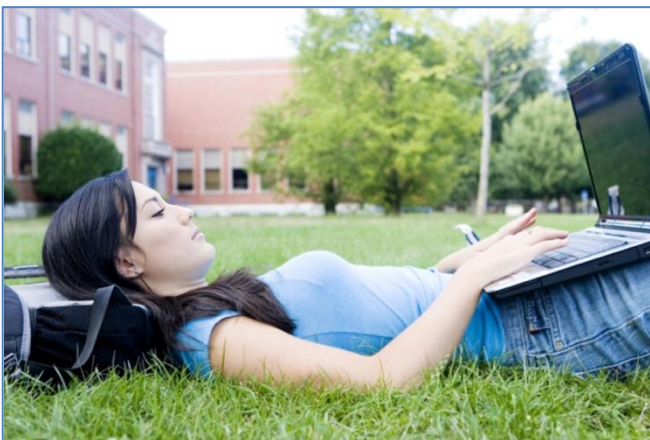
1. First go to fcps.org, the Frederick County Public School's homepage.
   LINK: http://www.fcps.org/fcps/site/default.asp

2. Then click on FAMILIES and STUDENTS in the Contents menu bar on the left.

3. Then click on RESEARCH PORTALS in the Contents menu bar on the left.

This page is important because it will also provide you with access to your library's print collection: books, encyclopedias, etc. But you will only be able to see the listings, not the actual text. Clicking in the title "You See More," will allow you to search school libraries to materials you may want to check out later.

LINK: http://www.youseemore.com/FCPS/

To access the databases, look at the right hand menu bar. Click on High School Research Portal to bring up the chart of databases like the one below.
LINK: http://acad.fcps.org/portals/hs.htm

FCPS High School Research Portal

Subscription Databases (Please see your Media Specialist for remote access information)	
ISSUES & CONTROVERSIES	Through topical essays Issues & Controversies provide a thorough review of all sides of an issue.
MyRoad™	Collegeboard.com's college and career planning Web site. My Road provides career and college guidance. This site provides personality assessments to assist in career selections, as well as tips on applying for colleges.
SIRS Discoverer on the web	SIRS Discoverer is a general reference database for children grades 1-9 with full-text articles and images. Features include activities such as science experiments, craft projects, writing activities, biographies of every U.S. President and other notable people, fiction articles, and country facts. Discoverer WebFind is a database of carefully chosen Internet resources on almost any subject appropriate for researchers in grades. Online tutorial available.
SIRS Knowledge Source™	SIRS Knowledge Source is a collection of 6 databases for students in grade 6-12. Full-text articles, graphics, photographs, government documents, primary sources, ebooks, and previewed websites.
INFOTRAC GALE GROUP	Thomson Gale's Student Resource Center contain magazine and newspaper articles, primary source documents, multimedia content, and the Gale "Discovering", "Exploring", and "Junior Reference" series.
Science RESOURCE CENTER THOMSON GALE	Also from Thomson Gale researching science topics has never been easier with Science Resource Center.
THE WORLD ALMANAC REFERENCE DATABASE	Search The World Almanac reference database for facts, figures and other statistical information on topics of general interest. **Please note:** World Almanac is no longer being provided as a stand-alone product it is incorporated within Facts on File's Issues & Controversies.
WORLD BOOK	World Book Online provides full-text of print version plus additional articles, an atlas, multimedia content, and "Behind the Headlines" (current events) as well as an intermediate-level Spanish Encyclopedia. New to the district is World Book Advanced. Integrating both primary and secondary databases in a single search this database is tailored for the needs and skills of more advanced researchers.
Your Opinion Counts!! These Resources Are For You, Let Us Know How You Like Them. Send Us Your Input About What's Being Offered and How You Use Them. Thanks.	

Reference Sites

Answers.com   How Stuff Works   National Geographic Maps
Biography.com   InfoPlease   Nat'l Science Digital Lib.

📌 CIA World Factbook	📌 Internet Public Library	📌 Occupational Outlook Hdbk
📌 Dictionary.com	📌 Library of Congress	📌 Ref Desk
📌 Encarta	📌 Library Spot	📌 Sailor Reference Services
📌 Frederick Co. Public Library	📌 MerriamWebster Dictionary	📌 Time 100
📌 The Free Dictionary	📌 A Million Lives	📌 USA.gov

Current Events	Homework Help for Kids	Search Engines for Kids
📌 BBC News (Americas)	📌 Discovery School	📌 All the Web
📌 CNN Headline News	📌 Homework Spot	📌 Ask.com
📌 Frederick News Post	📌 Homework Help	📌 Brainboost
📌 Fox News	**Create Your Sources!**	📌 Google
📌 Google News Search	📌 Citation Machine	📌 KartOO
📌 MSNBC	📌 Citation Maker (O.P.E.N.)	📌 Librarians' Internet Index
📌 PBS NewsHour	📌 EasyBib	📌 Yahoo
📌 SunSpotWays	📌 KnightCite	
📌 Washington Post		
📌 Time		
📌 NY Times Student		

FCPS Frederick County Public Schools
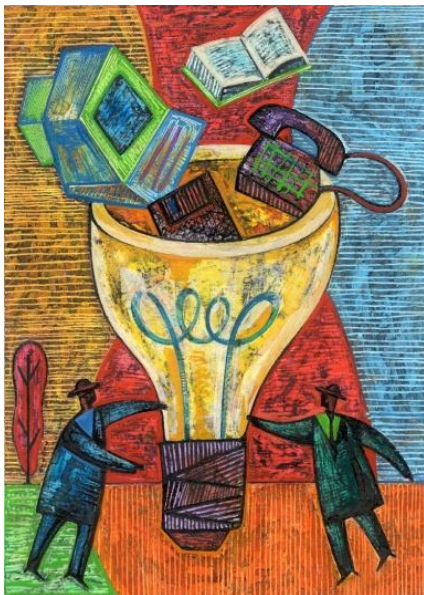
ACTIVITIES: You will use the databases and links above to locate information that answers specific questions. You will also need to reflect on the strengths of each database in order to complete a final analysis chart.

ACTIVITY I: The first activity will involve exploring the SIRS databases produced by ProQuest, the company that sells FCPS a subscription to its services.

ACTIVITY II: The second activity will examine some of the additional databases available.

ACTIVITY III: The third activity will focus solely on the additional links on the research portal.

RESEARCH

1. Define 2. Identify 3. Locate 4. Interact 5. Synthesize 6. Evaluate

Name: _____

Date: _____

Block: _____

Assignment I: Examining SIRS informational online databases. Step 3 of the Big 6 Research Process: Locating information

DIRECTIONS: Using the databases you accessed from FCPS, please fill in the blanks and answer the questions.

1. When you are using one of the databases from a computer outside of school, you need a _____ . To get this, you should check with the _____ _____ in the library. GO AND DO! Now that you have a list of the _____, you can get into the databases when you are not at school.

2. Click on the SIRS Knowledge Source. Do you need a password?   YES   NO
    Why/Why not? _____

3. Read each of the descriptions for the following three SIRS databases. Which of the following databases would be a good place to start if you were researching American inventions of the early 1900s? CIRCLE.

    SIRS Knowledge Source   SIRS Discoverer   SIRS Decades

    Explain why this database be a good place to look.
    _____

4. Which of the following databases would be a good place to start if you were helping a younger person research the country of Brazil? CIRCLE.

    SIRS Knowledge Source   SIRS Discoverer   SIRS Decades

    Explain why this database be a good place to look.
    _____
    Even though this database may be geared to someone younger, how could this database also help you? _____

5. Click on the SIRS Knowledge Source [SIRS Knowledge Source](#) and examine this page carefully.

- What database box should I make sure was checked if I wanted to find out more about the immigration controversy? _____

- What box would I uncheck if I wasn't too interested in finding about the arts and cultures of a place? _____

- If my teacher said I could not use any websites in my research, which database should NOT be included in my overall search? _____

- There are two features on this page that will help you when you have to write a persuasive piece about an important issue for your English class or when you have to participate in a debate about a controversial topic. The first tool is the SIRS Issues Researcher connection in the middle of the page. Where is the second tool located and what is it called? _____

_____

_____

6. Click on the tab at the top titled Database Features. How does this page and its features help you focus your search?
   _____
   _____
   _____

LOOK BACK at the TABs
7. Click on the tap labeled Topic Browse. How is this page organized? _____
_____
_____
How is it different than the Database Features section? _____
_____
_____

8. Click on Quick Search and Advanced Search.
What are some of the many different features between the two?
When might Quick Search be more appropriate?

_____
_____

_____
_____

9. On both the Quick Search and Advanced Search, lexiles are mentioned. Lexiles, as some of you know, refer to how difficult a text may be to read. The higher the lexile number, the harder the text. Being about to sort and search based on lexile level has advantages. What do you think some of those advantages are? List at least two.

A. _____

B. _____

10. Next to the tabs are four very helpful tools. Besides the dictionary and thesaurus, there is a tool called _____ . This tool allows you to keep track of the articles, websites, photos, etc. you want to use. You can "tag" each item and develop a list of resources.

There is also another link to Toolbox. This reference toolbox has powerful tools to help you. To you, what are the two more important links in the references toolbox and why?

_____
_____
_____
_____

11. Return to the Quick Search tab. Click it. Type in POETRY. Make sure KEYWORD and NATURAL LANGUAGE is checked. Hit SEARCH.

What features do you notice about the page that comes up?
A. How can you sort your results? _____
B. How many total pieces of information did it gather? _____
C. How many newspaper articles are there? _____
D. How many magazines? _____
E. How many government documents? _____
F. How many primary sources? _____
G. How many websites? _____
H. How many graphics/media resources? _____

12. Look at the entries in the middle of the page. Scroll down to the entry "What's the Use? Writing Poetry in Wartime."

A. In what magazine/periodical was it published? _____
B. When? _____
C. How many pages is it? _____

D. What is the lexile? _____

E. Read through the summary to get the "gist."

F. Based on the type of publication, the lexile and summary, what conclusions can you make about how difficult the information will be to understand?

_____
_____
_____
_____

G. Even if you don't use this article, how can the information under SUBJECTS help you with your searching?

_____
_____
_____
_____

13. Look at the entries in the middle of the page. Scroll down to the entry "Poetry saved My Life: An Interview with Lorna Dee Cervantes."

A. In what magazine/periodical was it published? _____

B. When? _____

C. How many pages is it?

D. What is the lexile? _____

E. Read through the summary to get the "gist."

F. Based on the type of publication, the lexile and summary, what conclusions can you make about how difficult the information will be to understand?

_____
_____
_____

14. Now go to the bottom box on the left hand side of the page. Click on the subject: *Poetry. Social aspects.* What do you notice about the number of different resources on the left hand side? _____

15. Visit the GRAPHICS/MEDIA link. What type of resources related to poetry do you find here?

_____

16. Visit the WEBSELECT link. What webpage does it take you to? What is the topic or subject of the webpage? How does it connect to the topic of POETRY. SOCIAL ASPECTS?

_____
_____

17. Now, visit your old friend Google. Type in Poetry.
    How many results did you get? (look in the upper right-hand corner in the blue bar).
    How does this compare to the SIRS database?

18. How much of the Google information is accurate and reputable? _____
    How much of the SIRS information is accurate and reputable? _____

Now there are some cool things you can do with Google and sorting, but it takes time, and you still have to evaluate it all!

While still with the poetry listings up, see if you can further narrow your results. Click on :show options" in the blue bar on the left-hand side.

TRY IT in GOOGLE	What's Good?	What's Missing? Or What's Not Good?
Wonder Wheel		
Timeline		
Related searches		

Final Reflection: Rate on a 4-star scale. 4 being the best, the easiest, the most, etc. ★

Feature	SIRS Database	GOOGLE
Accuracy/Trustworthiness		
Easy to search by reading level		
Easy to identify types of resources, like magazines, government publication, etc.		
Easy to access different, related databases		
Easy to narrow search		
Provides suggestions for additional, related topics		
Provides detailed summaries		
Allows you to "tag" and group together your resources		
TOTAL NUMBER of STARS		

I actually have an introduction lesson of getting to the database portal and then activity I, which focuses on SIRS and compares it to Google. There would be two more lessons exploring the other databases and features on our FCPS portal page. I decided to start with SIRS because it offers a lot of variety and accesses smaller databases within. I would also want to assess prior knowledge of SIRS as some teachers in elementary and middle school rely heavily on this database. SIRS is easy to move around in, but does contain features that be easily overlooked, such as the lexile, tagging, and topic browsing, all tools that can help make the information gathering process much easier, and which Google doesn't really have. Of course SIRS also is more trustworthy and less overwhelming with its number of results, something students clearly see when they compare the "number of hits" between the two.