

Creating and Developing WebQuests

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Step 1- Decide on your topic

What would you like your students to learn using a WebQuest? Think about the goals of your course, the web site addresses you have brought with you to class, and the type of information for your field that is on the web, etc.

Write your topic here or in your Word Document:

Step 2 - Deciding on your goal

What would you like students to be able to do with the information they are learning? Recognize it? Describe it? Compare? Analyze?

Write your learning goal here or in your Word Document:

Usually WebQuests start off with an introduction to the topic of the WebQuest and the learning goal.

Write some notes for yourself about your introduction here or in your Word Document:

Step 3 - Defining a task

Once your topic and goals are established, you will need to think about how you want to use the web to have students accomplish that goal. You will also need to think about how *you* will know that they have, in fact, gotten out of it what you expected. In a WebQuest, students put together some sort of product. This could be filling out a worksheet, creating a newspaper, writing an essay, giving a presentation, etc. When you define the task, you set the ground rules for how students will gather information on the topic, analyze and synthesize the information, and how they will present the information that they have discovered.

Write a draft of the task you will set for your students.

Step 4 - Finding web resources.

Now that you have defined the task that you expect people to accomplish, you need to identify web sites that will help them find the information that they need for their task. The web sites you select should be credible, informative web sites that the students can use as models of good web sites. Therefore, it is a good idea to keep some key questions in mind (from Grabe & Grabe 2000).

- Is the author named?
- What are the author's personal credentials as an expert in this field?
- What is the author's institutional affiliation or the sponsoring organization of the web site?
- Is the institution or organization a reputable one? Does it have legitimate, unbiased expertise in the subject? Is it selling anything?
- Is a link provided to a webmaster who will answer questions about the site?
- Are references provided to supporting works?
- Is the data up-to-date?
- Are the data-gathering methods explained?
- If the document presents a strong opinion, does the author deal fairly with other viewpoints or at least acknowledge that this is a personal view?

Here are some good web resources to get you started:

- <http://www.merlot.org/> - Collection of peer-reviewed on-line learning material for higher education.
- <http://www.utexas.edu/world/lecture/> - World Lecture Hall.
- <http://www.webct.com/communities> - WebCT has communities organized by academic subject and each page has featured links.
- <http://resources.blackboard.com/scholar/general/main.jsp> - Blackboard academic resources. Featured academic resources for many subject areas.
- <http://library.gmu.edu/resources/web.html#webguides> - webguides and tools from the George Mason University librarian subject specialists.
- <http://www.newspapers.com/> - lists newspapers around the world
- <http://www.si.edu/> - gateway to all information on-line about the different Smithsonian Institute museums.
- <http://webexhibits.org/> - listing of interesting museums web exhibits from various museums all over the world.

Step 5 - Writing the specifics

Now you will need to write the specifics of the assignment. These usually include:

- a description of the process students should use to complete the task
- guidelines on how students should organize the material

You may also want to include:

- an assessment rubric
- a template to help students organize the information

Write a draft of your assignment specifics.

Step 6 - Conclusion

Now you will need to write a conclusion that summarizes what the students have done and learned while doing this activity.

Write a draft of your conclusion.

Step 7 - Assessment

How can you grade WebQuests? Usually WebQuests are graded on the final product that the students produce as part of their WebQuest. Many faculty also use rubrics to help them assess WebQuests. The WebQuest website has some sample WebQuests with rubrics that you can look at.