

Tips for Creating Your Own WebQuests

By Lorrie Jackson

WHY A TECHTORIAL?

What will I learn today?

You will learn what a WebQuest is and how to create a simple WebQuest.

What hardware and/or software does the techtorial apply to?

Anyone with Internet access and a word processing program can learn to create a WebQuest.

Which National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers does the techtorial address?

The techtorial will help teachers accomplish standard IIIc in particular.

The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) has developed a set of National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers. Standards or Performance Indicators are included for each techtorial to help teachers and administrators improve technology proficiency. For a complete description of the standards indicated, go to [NETS for Teachers](#), click Standards in the menu bar on the left, and then click the arrow to the right of Standards and Performance Indicators for Teachers.

WHAT ARE WEBQUESTS?

The World Wide Web contains millions of sites; many are inaccurate or inappropriate for use in the K-12 classroom. Students often are unable to separate the quality sites from the uninformed or biased sites and, even if they do happen to select quality sites in the course of their research, they may simply summarize -- or worse, plagiarize -- the information they find.

The WebQuest format allows educators to help students use content-rich Web resources in ways that encourage higher order thinking.

- WebQuests are classroom activities that guide students as they learn to use resources from the Web to create new projects that analyze, synthesize, or evaluate the information they find.
- WebQuests are inquiry-based. Students must actively use online information rather than simply copying it.

- Some WebQuests require one to two class periods to complete; others take weeks or more.
- [WebQuests](#) were created by Bernie Dodge with Tom March in 1995.

WebQuests can be designed in all content areas for students of all ages. [Bernie Poole's WebQuest on WebQuests](#) is designed for preservice and inservice teachers. Additional WebQuests -- for a variety of grade levels and content areas -- can be found by clicking the Top, Middling, or New link in the menu bar at [Webquest.org](#), or by searching the site's entire WebQuest database.

WHY USE WEBQUESTS?

WebQuests

- help students
 - acquire new knowledge.
 - integrate new information with what they already know.
 - infer, analyze, and evaluate knowledge.
 - demonstrate understanding of how what they've learned applies, relates, or contrasts with prior knowledge.
- require students to be active learners who create new works.
- improve group skills and organizational skills.
- empower students to use their own critical thinking skills
- motivate students to get involved in their learning.
- provide just enough structure to keep students on task, while allowing enough autonomy for students to take ownership of their work and display creativity.

DISSECT THE BASIC WEBQUEST

The basic WebQuest contains six parts:

1. **Introduction:** Explains what the WebQuest is about and arouses student interest.
2. **Task:** Describes the final product.
3. **Process:** Lists the steps students will take to accomplish the task. Often includes roles students must assume as they complete the steps.

4. **Resources:** Lists specific Web pages that will help the group complete their project. May include offline resources as well.
5. **Evaluation:** Explains how the process and final product will be evaluated and graded. Discusses the roles students might play in peer or self-evaluation. Often includes rubrics.
6. **Conclusion:** Provides an opportunity for students to review and apply what they learned.

In addition, many WebQuests are interdisciplinary. Most require students to work in teams, with each member assuming a different role.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF WEBQUEST CREATION

In the article [FOCUS: Five Rules for Writing a Great WebQuest](#), Bernie Dodge offers five guiding principles to keep in mind when creating a WebQuest. To FOCUS students' learning, Dodge says, teachers must:

1. ***Find great sites.***
 - Master advanced search techniques for using search engines. Use the [Advanced Search in Google](#)), for example.
 - Search hidden Web pages not found by search engines: large databases, library resources (such as the [Library of Congress](#)).
 - Save what you find by copying and pasting Web site addresses (URLs) into a Word document or by using free bookmarking sites, such as [Backflip](#) or [I Keep Bookmarks](#).
2. ***Orchestrate learners and resources.*** Figure out how to make do with however many computers you have. Ensure trouble-free group work by creating a cooperative learning environment.
3. ***Challenge learners to think.*** It's not the information students acquire that counts; it's what they do with that information.
4. ***Use the Medium.*** What makes the Internet different from other mediums? The ability to interact with others around the world? Access to multimedia resources such as video or audio? Take advantage of the unique features the Internet contains.
5. ***Scaffold high expectations.*** Make it easy for students to succeed by providing guides that help them acquire, transform, and present knowledge.

TOOLS YOU CAN USE

Are you new to WebQuests? These tools can help you create successful a WebQuest on your first try:

- Bernie Dodge's [templates](#)
- the [Web Quest Generator](#) from Teach-nology.
- the [WebGuide](#) model from Internet4Classrooms can help you apply the principles of a WebQuest in a far simpler and quicker (one day) lesson.

TELL ME MORE

Where can I learn more about creating WebQuests

You can find more information and tools at [The Official WebQuest Page](#) by Bernie Dodge, Ozline's [Why WebQuests?](#), Kathy Schrock's [Web Quest in Our Future](#), and Thirteen Ed Online's [WebQuests](#) page.

What's next? Next week's techtorial will reprise the top six questions parents ask about kids and computers.