Search for Information on the Internet

You can use the Internet for answers to all kinds of questions. The trick is to make sure you are finding reliable sources that provide accurate information.

1. **Identify the topic and information you need, and enter key words or phrases about the topic into a search engine.** Make a list of key words or phrases related to your topic. These could be names, dates, or other details about the topic. Enter your key words into a search engine. Read the titles of the first 10–20 results. If these results are too general, try adding more specific key words until you get results related to your topic.

2. **Analyze headings and URLs to find reliable sources. Look for URLs that end in .edu or .gov, or Web sites of well-known newspapers, news magazines, and news broadcasters. Avoid sites that show bias, and try to find sites that give reliable sources for their information.** You may get many results from the search engine. Look at the URLs, or Web addresses, to get clues about the source of the Web site. Within the URL, you may see the name of a newspaper, government office, or other reliable source. URLs that end in .edu are usually university Web sites. URLs that end in .gov are government offices. Writers at universities and government offices are often experts in their field and will try to present the facts without bias. Focus on the sites that seem the most reliable.

3. **Use information from a variety of sites and check the online information against other sources, such as other reliable Web sites, encyclopedias, and newspapers.** Be careful not to base your research on a single Web site. Even the best sites may have mistakes. Read other reliable Web sites or do some additional research at the library. Reading multiple sources will give you a better understanding of your topic.