



Overview

Library Webs: an Internet library containing over 100,000 carefully selected links for the secondary school curriculum. The collection is arranged in subject order as in a regular library. The topics are divided into sections which help students to grasp the topic as a whole while being able to investigate aspects of it in depth. Users can search the database on a keyword search basis, or go straight into the topics. The resource has been designed and developed with Australian secondary school students in mind.

Benefits

Teacher Librarians

Teacher librarians using *Library Webs* will not need to spend hours searching for sites, developing resources or creating web pages. The *Library Webs* database is constantly being revised and updated; therefore there is no need to be concerned about sites which have become obsolete or unavailable. *Library Webs* staff welcomes suggestions for new topics and sections if resources are not already available in the database. Teacher-Librarians using *Library Webs* will have more time to do what they do best – assisting students and teachers to select the most reliable and accurate information for their research requirements.

Teachers

Teachers using *Library Webs* discover that an extensive Internet library is immediately available and that they do not need to spend their own time finding resources for their students. During research lessons, teachers are assured that their students are accessing only the best quality sites on the Web and that time is not being wasted on futile or misdirected searches. Teachers may also suggest new topics and sections to *Library Webs* for upcoming assignments. Most topics contain a section just for teachers containing ideas for lessons plans and online activities that can be used 'as is' or adapted for classroom use.

Library Webs resources can be used as a support to study units or as the central focus to a unit of work. Because of the division of each topic into sections, *Library Webs* provide a unique set of resources for group work, and offers a scaffolding tool for in depth study.

Students

Students using *Library Webs* have immediate access to authoritative Internet resources and are able to stay focused on learning outcomes, without the distraction of all the extraneous material which is present on the Internet.

Library Webs assist students to learn independently. Students are guided to sites which have been selected for their quality, accuracy, reliability and relevance. Students have room to explore topics broadly or to study in depth. The sites presented by *Library Webs* are always in context, so students are aware of how their facet of study fits into the broader framework of the subject.

Special features

- *Illustrations*: Each topic is illustrated with relevant graphics that enhance the learning experience.
- *Descriptors*: Websites that have a special attribute, for example newspaper article, map, interactive, have a descriptor in square brackets after the title.
- *Link acknowledgement*: the source of each link is acknowledged so that teachers and students are aware of the origin and authenticity of the resources. This acknowledgement also assists in compiling bibliographies.
- *Dates*: Most websites are dated to indicate the time of their publication or currency. Some are not dated as they are generally updated regularly by their web publishers.
- *Grade level*: Each link is labeled as appropriate for Senior School or Middle School. Senior School sites contain information which has advanced vocabulary, concepts and adult issues (e.g. legal studies, some social issues etc.). Middle School sites contain information which has low-to middle level vocabulary, easily navigable layout or a less advanced approach to the subject
- *For Teachers*: The last section in each topic is especially for teachers and contains lesson plans, interactive games, worksheets and other materials suitable for classroom use.

Finding information

There are various ways in which subscribers are able to find the information they require. In every case, *Library Webs* are simple to use. No complex strategies or sophisticated research skills are required to access the information.

Topic listing

A full listing of the topics within each category can be found under the Topics tab.

Browsing through the Subject categories

As can be seen from the home page, the resources are arranged under twenty-one broad headings. Checking the contents of each heading will give users an overall view of what is available. For instance, if *Ancient and Medieval History* is selected, the list of topics currently available appears on the screen, e.g. *Stone Age*, *China: Prehistoric and Bronze Age*, *Egypt: Ancient Civilisation*, *Mesopotamian Civilisations*, *Europe: Ancient Peoples*, *Rome: Republic*, *Middle Ages*

If *Middle Ages* is chosen, there is not a long list of sites on the Middle Ages; instead there is a carefully organised set of sections dealing with various aspects of the medieval period –the Black Death, the role of the Church, the Crusades, the feudal system and so on. A general section covers any gaps. Users will then be able to focus on the aspect in which they are particularly interested. The frustration of sorting through the plethora of material delivered by the average search engine is removed. The best material is right here at the user's fingertips – in context.

Keyword search and Advanced search

As well as the Topic listing and Subject categories, *Library Webs* offer a keyword and advanced search facility to access the resources.

Example of keyword search: slavery

If a broad term like *slavery* is typed into the search bar, a list of links will appear. Under each link, in fine print, the search results reveal a ‘breadcrumb trail’ that shows the location of that link within its context in the database collection. For example, the user will see there is information on slavery in:

- Modern World History > American Civil Rights Movement > Slavery

This indicates that the link is found in the subject category, *Modern World History*, under the Topic, *American Civil Rights Movement* which has a section entitled *Slavery*.

Similarly, more links about slavery are found in other places such as:

- Geography > Developing Countries > Developing Countries: Children’s Issues - General
- Ancient and Medieval History > Ottoman Empire: Civilisation > Ottoman Empire: Women
- Modern World History > Colonial America 1607-1775 > Colonial America: Indentured Labour and Slavery
- Religions > Famous Christians > Wilberforce, William 1759-1833
- Life Sciences > Biomes and food security > Chocolate
- Ancient and Medieval History > Egypt: Ancient Civilisation > Egypt, Ancient: Slavery
- Ancient and Medieval History > Rome Empire > Rome, Ancient: Slavery

The user is able to either click on the link and go directly to that single website, or click on the topic or section which best serves their purpose and be taken to another list of links relating to a specific aspect of slavery.

Example of advanced search

If the following terms are used in the Advanced search facility,

- Exact phrase: *climate change*
- Any of the words: *sea ocean*

the results list shows links from a variety of locations within the database, for example:

- Geography > Pacific Islands: Global warming > Pacific Islands: Global warming
- Life Sciences > World Biomes > Coasts
- Geography > Australia’s Island Neighbours > Kiribati
- Geography > Pacific Islands: Global warming > Kiribati: Global warming
- Chemistry and Earth Sciences > Weather and climate > Global climate change
- Social Sciences > Inuit > Inuit: Climate change

Users can click immediately on the link of their choice, or click on the Topic or Section title to gain access to many more links on the effect of climate change on our seas and oceans in that particular Topic or Section, regardless of whether the term *climate change* actually appears in the link title or not. The Category/Topic/Section locator gives the context of the link and so assists users in their selection of resources.

Sometimes, the same topic/section is found in different categories to facilitate access by users who use the topic list or are browsing through the categories, rather than using the search engine.

Selection Policy

Library Webs sites are always chosen from reliable sources

1. Personal pages are avoided unless the content is well-written, accurate and the author appears to have reasonable credentials, and other material is scarce. Personal pages with pop-ups and advertising are avoided.
2. Commercial pages are used when the information is well-written, accurate and intelligible to secondary students. Commercial sites with pop-ups and inappropriate advertising are avoided.
3. Resources are chosen to cater for various reading levels, so that students from year levels 7-12 should all be able to find appropriate sites in any section. Senior School sites contain information that has advanced vocabulary, concepts and adult issues (e.g. legal studies, some social issues etc.). Middle School sites contain information that has low-to middle level vocabulary, and has generally attractive and easily navigable layout.
4. A variety of viewpoints is presented where possible so that users are aware of the multi-faceted nature of some topics and are able to detect bias and point of view.

Updates and upgrades

Library Webs are constantly being updated and upgraded to ensure that users are not inconvenienced by dead links and to keep pace with global events and local changes. It is the nature of the Internet to change, so there will always be some dead links. However *Library Webs*' policy of continual checking, deleting and correcting keeps these dead links at a minimum.

Personal service

The *Library Webs* team is committed to cooperating with teachers and teacher librarians to provide quality resources for Australian secondary students. If a particular topic is not yet covered in the *Library Webs* collection, a copy of the assignment topic can be sent to the staff at *Library Webs* and within a reasonable period, a list will be created which caters for these specific needs. The new topic is then included in the database for other users to access. Extra sections are added to existing topics all the time, so if an extra aspect of a topic is required, this can be arranged as well.