

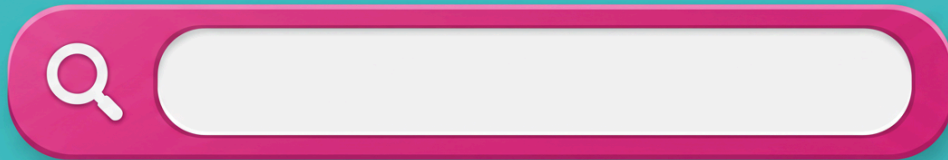
## Search Engine Skills

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### Textbook

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## Search Engine Skills



The Internet is an amazing tool filled with information on almost anything you can imagine! But with so much out there, how do you find exactly what you need, and how can you tell if the information is actually true and trustworthy? This lesson will teach you how to be a smart Internet detective.

### Finding What You Need: Searching Smart on the Internet

When you need to find something online, you use a [search engine](#). A **search engine** is a special program (like Google or Bing) that searches for and identifies items in a huge database using keywords to find websites for information on the Internet. It's like having a super-powered librarian who can find books on any topic in seconds!

To get the best results from a search engine, you need to search **efficiently and effectively**. Here's how:

- **Be Specific with [Keywords](#):** Don't use whole questions or common, unnecessary words like "the," "a," or "how to." Instead, use **specific keywords** that directly describe what you're looking for.
  - *Instead of:* "what is the largest animal that lives in the ocean"
  - *Try:* "largest ocean animal" or "blue whale size"
- **Use Quotation Marks for Exact Phrases:** If you need to find an exact phrase, put it inside **quotation marks** ( " " ). This tells the [search engine](#) to only show results where those words appear together in that specific order.

- Searching for: **"Mount Everest height"** will give you pages with that exact phrase.
- Searching for: **Mount Everest height** (without quotes) might give you pages that mention "Mount Everest" and "height" separately, even if they aren't talking about the mountain's specific elevation.

## Is It True? Identifying Credible Online Content

The Internet has all kinds of information, but not all of it is accurate or trustworthy. Being able to tell if online content is **credible** (believable and reliable) is a super important skill. Always ask yourself, "Can I trust this information?" Here are some things to check:

- **Author:** Who wrote this? Is their name clearly stated? Do they seem like an expert on the topic? For example, an article about space written by an astronaut or a NASA scientist would be more credible than one written by a random person with no experience.
- **Date:** When was the information published or last updated? Information, especially in science, technology, or current events, can change quickly. An article from 2005 about smartphones might not be very useful or accurate today!
- **Verified Sources:** Does the content mention where its information came from? Does it include links to research studies, official reports, or other well-known, respected organizations? Reputable websites often cite their sources, allowing you to check the original information yourself.
  - **Domain:** Look at the end of the website's [URL](#) (the [Top-Level Domain](#)).
    - **.gov** (government) and **.edu** (educational institutions like universities) websites are generally considered very reliable.
    - **.org** (organization) sites can be good, but check the organization's purpose. Are they trying to sell you something or convince you of a specific idea?
    - **.com** (commercial) and **.net** (network) sites can be anything from very reliable news sites to personal blogs, so you need to be extra careful checking other components.
- **Design:** Does the website look professional and well-organized? Is it easy to read? Or does it look messy, have lots of flashing ads, pop-ups, or strange fonts? While not always a perfect sign, a sloppy design can sometimes be a warning that the site isn't very professional.
- **Writing Style:** Is the writing clear, well-organized, and free of spelling and grammar mistakes? Does it use neutral language, or does it sound biased, emotional, or try too hard to convince you of something? Trustworthy sources usually present information clearly and objectively.

Becoming a smart Internet user means knowing not only how to find information quickly but also how to critically evaluate if that information is credible. By using specific keywords and quotation marks in your searches, and by checking the author, date, sources, domain, design, and writing style of the content you find, you can become an expert at finding and using trustworthy information on the Internet.

## Critical Thinking Questions

1. You are researching a science project about space travel. You find two articles. One is on [nasa.gov](#) and was updated last month. The other is on a personal blog (a [.com](#) site) and was written five years ago by someone whose name you don't recognize. Which article would you trust more and why, based on what you learned about credible content?

2. You want to find the exact lyrics to your favorite song. What search strategy (using keywords and punctuation) would be most effective? Give an example.
3. Why is it important to check the *date* of an online article if you are researching a rapidly changing topic, like new technology?

## Questions (10)

### 1. What is a search engine?

MULTIPLE CHOICE

Choose the correct answer:

- A. A type of internet connection.
- B. A company that provides internet access.
- C. A program that searches for and identifies items in a huge database using keywords to find websites.
- D. A specific website address (URL).

### 2. To get the best results from a search engine, what should you do with your keywords?

MULTIPLE CHOICE

Choose the correct answer:

- A. Use full questions and common, unnecessary words.
- B. Make them as general as possible.
- C. Be specific and directly describe what you're looking for.
- D. Use only single letters as keywords.

### 3. Why should you use quotation marks (") around a phrase when searching?

MULTIPLE CHOICE

Choose the correct answer:

- A. To make the search faster.
- B. To tell the search engine to only show results where those words appear together in that specific order.
- C. To broaden your search results.
- D. To search for images only.

**4. Which of the following is an example of an efficient search query for finding information about the tallest building in the world?**

MULTIPLE CHOICE

**Choose the correct answer:**

- A. "How tall is the biggest building?"
- B. "buildings and height"
- C. "tallest building in world"
- D. "what is the height of the largest building that exists"

**5. When evaluating the credibility of online content, why is checking the 'Author' important?**

MULTIPLE CHOICE

**Choose the correct answer:**

- A. To see if they have a professional-looking photo.
- B. To find out their personal email address.
- C. To see if their name is stated and if they seem like an expert on the topic.
- D. To know if they live in your country.

**6. Why is the 'Date' of online information important for credibility?**

MULTIPLE CHOICE

**Choose the correct answer:**

- A. Older information is always more reliable.
- B. It tells you how long the website has been online.
- C. The date is only important for news articles, not other types of information.
- D. Information, especially in certain fields, can change quickly, so recent data is often more accurate.

**7. Which Top-Level Domain (TLD) is generally considered very reliable for information?**

MULTIPLE CHOICE

**Choose the correct answer:**

- A. .com
- B. .net
- C. .org
- D. .gov

**8. When assessing the credibility of online content, what should you look for regarding 'Verified Sources'?**

MULTIPLE CHOICE

**Choose the correct answer:**

- A. Whether the website has many advertisements.
- B. If the content mentions where its information came from, with links to research or reputable organizations.
- C. If the website uses bold fonts and bright colors.
- D. If the website is easy to share on social media.

**9. Which aspect of a website's 'Design' might be a warning sign that the site isn't very professional or trustworthy?**

MULTIPLE CHOICE

**Choose the correct answer:**

- A. It uses a simple color scheme.
- B. It has a clear navigation menu.
- C. It looks messy, has lots of flashing ads, pop-ups, or strange fonts.
- D. It has a small amount of text on each page.

**10. What does it mean if the 'Writing Style' of an online article sounds biased, emotional, or tries too hard to convince you of something?**

MULTIPLE CHOICE

**Choose the correct answer:**

- A. It means the author is very passionate and therefore more trustworthy.
- B. It indicates the article is likely a verified source.
- C. It suggests the article is a scientific study.
- D. It can be a sign that the source is not very trustworthy or objective.

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## Answer Keys & Solutions

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### Questions

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#### 1. What is a search engine?

MULTIPLE CHOICE

**Correct Answer:**

- A. A type of internet connection. ✗ Incorrect
- B. A company that provides internet access. ✗ Incorrect
- C. A program that searches for and identifies items in a huge database using keywords to find websites. ✓ Correct
- D. A specific website address (URL). ✗ Incorrect

#### 2. To get the best results from a search engine, what should you do with your keywords?

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**Correct Answer:**

- A. Use full questions and common, unnecessary words. ✗ Incorrect
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- D. Use only single letters as keywords. ✗ Incorrect

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✓ Correct

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✓ Correct

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| B. It indicates the article is likely a verified source.                  | ✗ Incorrect |
| C. It suggests the article is a scientific study.                         | ✗ Incorrect |
| D. It can be a sign that the source is not very trustworthy or objective. | ✓ Correct   |