



# LOW HANGING FRUIT

## Research for the Elementary Set

By Jeannie Standal

Whether its finding the answers (research) or asking the questions (inquiry), when it comes to research projects, the struggle is real. With fact-finding, note-taking, and synthesizing on one hand, and plagiarism, misinformation, and disinformation on the other, where are teachers and students to turn?

Google and other search engines aren't bad—they are a fast , easy tool for our day-to-day information needs. However, they are not the best way for young researchers to begin. Primary grade students simply haven't yet learned the information literacy skills to sort through that volume of information, and based on the work of child development experts such as Jean Piaget, kids in the Concrete Operational stage of development (ages 6 or 7 to 11 or 12) should be sorting, classifying, observing, and comparing facts. Synthesizing information, as when kids research a topic and then write an essay, is not typically achieved until a child reaches the Formal Operational stage, around age 11 or 12.

Fact-finding and information sorting adventures are ideal for young students who are learning about both early research skills and online research tools. Online Encyclopedias are a good place to start. They often have several versions to fit the needs of any K-6 student, regardless of their reading abilities.

### A word about online encyclopedias

Online encyclopedias are always up-to-date, have interactive elements, and come in several versions to meet the needs of students of different ages, reading abilities, and languages. Print encyclopedias, on the other hand, are likely out of date on some topics by the time they come off the press. Every Idaho student has access to World Book Online through LiLiSchools.org.

In the midst of searching for information, young researchers must learn to determine fact vs opinion, too. Understanding the difference between objective and subjective content is difficult, even for adults, and requires lots of practice. Graphic organizers are a great help for young researchers getting a handle on classification of facts and learning the difference between fact and opinion. A [Mini-Zine template](#) can be a fun way to help sharpen those skills, especially for students who don't enjoy writing. Mini-Zines can allow students to show what they know using minimal text along with art and images.

For students young and old , the sheer volume of information returned from a search is overwhelming. Starting with lessons about facts, where to find them, and how to classify and organize them will give young students the foundational skills they need for more sophisticated research later in their academic careers.

## LINKS TO MORE LEARNING



### Access to Resources and Services in the School Library: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

As the saying goes, "A good library has something in it to offend everyone." This is a lighthearted acknowledgement of the library as champion of the free and open exchange of information and ideas critical to a pluralistic and democratic society. Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons, intellectual freedom is constantly under siege . In light of this, it must be vigilantly defended. This American Library Association (ALA) interpretation of the [Library Bill of Rights](#) offers a valuable framework for educators and school librarians to do their part in this important fight: <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/accessresources>.

## PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS



### Potato, Puh-tah-toe?

#### LiLi.org vs. LiLiSchools.org

Want to know more about the differences between LiLi.org and LiLiSchools.org? Have a gander at the FAQs section of [lilischools.org](#) (at the top of the page, toward the right). Learn the ins and outs of both, why Google doesn't have all the answers (except for when it does), and which types of search is best suited to which purpose. There are also answers to some basic technical troubleshooting scenarios.

## DIGITAL TOOLS



### LiLiSchools.org

Enjoy a streamlined LiLi experience with half the calories! In the jungle of information resources, think of LiLiSchools.org as a manicured garden of everything the K-12 crowd needs to conduct scholarly research, and nothing they don't. Search for databases tailored to Grades K-4; 5-8; and 9-12. Tastes great, less filling! I Can't Believe It's Not LiLi.org! Check it out at <http://www.lilischools.org/>.



