

Topic: Dipping into a Dictionary and other reference material

Key Learning Areas: English - Language, English - Information Skills

Level: Upper Primary - Lower Secondary

Lesson Description: Reference resources are distinct from general resource material in that they tend to cover much wider areas of information in a more succinct manner. MacquarieNet is an online library of reference material. This lesson aims to introduce students to the concept of using reference material online while providing much of the traditional structures associated with using references. The lesson may be used with conventional reference material.

Summary of Procedure:

- Teacher introduction
- Student research
- Class discussion

Lesson Assessment:

At the conclusion of this lesson students should be able to

- define the terms reference, resource and distinguish between a reference book and a reference library.
- locate relevant information from a range of reference material.
- follow instructions to use the references to select the information required from specific reference material.
- organise the located information so that it logically answers the given questions.
- present the information in complete sentence form.
- recall key information, such as the key concept of reference material.



Materials required:

- Access to MacquarieNet and/or copies of a suitable English dictionary and other reference materials
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Lesson Procedure:

- **Teacher introduction**
 - Introduce the concept of reference materials and their value for research.
- **Student research**
 - Issue student worksheet and discuss the instructions.
- **Class discussion**
 - On completion of the worksheet, review the last question and discuss the conclusions reached by students.

Reference List

Macquarie OnLine Library contains a range of reference material including:

- *The Macquarie Dictionary Third Edition*, 1997 Macquarie Library
- AAP News
- *New Zealand Natural Heritage*.
- Fraser, Bryce *The Macquarie Book of Events* (1983) Macquarie Library
- *The Macquarie Dictionary of Australian Quotations* (1990) Macquarie Library
- *The Book of Quotations* (1994) Allen & Unwin
- *The Penguin Macquarie Dictionary of Australian Politics* (1988) Penguin Books Australia
- *The Macquarie Dictionary of Australian Education* (1989) Macquarie Library
- *The Macquarie Dictionary of Health Sciences*. (1989) Macquarie Library
- *The Macquarie Home Guide to Health and Medicine*, (1991) Macquarie Library
- *The Penguin Macquarie Dictionary of Economics & Finance*, (1988) Penguin Books. Australia

Extension activities:

- Select a topic and provide a research assignment based upon the guidelines on the worksheet

Student Worksheet - Dipping into a dictionary and other reference material

Focus Questions:

- How are reference materials arranged?
 - What information can be found in reference resources?
 - What information can dictionaries provide?
 - How can reference resources best be used?
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Research Task:

On-line search terms: reference, reference book, reference library

- ◆ Explain the difference between reference, reference book and reference library.
- ◆ Make a list of as many different types of reference books as you can locate.
- ◆ In your list underline any words which tell you about the subject matter the reference books contains (no underlining should mean that the book is a general book covering many different types of information)
- ◆ Your list should show that some reference material contains information of a specific kind. What kind of information is contained in a
 - ◆ dictionary
 - ◆ thesaurus
 - ◆ atlas ?
- ◆ Name two major types of reference material which are most likely to contain illustrations or pictures as well as text.
- ◆ Quickly skim through a range of reference materials.
 - ◆ Are they most likely to be arranged thematically, sequentially or alphabetically? (Note: use the dictionary to find out the meanings of these words if you need to do so)
 - ◆ Why is the preferred method of organising reference materials useful?
 - ◆ On-line only - What are the advantages of searching using keywords?
- ◆ A dictionary of the English language is a common reference book
 - ◆ Search the Macquarie Dictionary for the word 'orange' and provide
 - ◆ Three different meanings of the word
 - ◆ Its pronunciation
 - ◆ The part/s of speech
 - ◆ The origin of the word (the language from which it came)
{Note: to find the meanings of the abbreviations, carry out a search on-line using the abbreviations as the search term or look in the preface at the front of the dictionary for a list of abbreviations}
- ◆ Use another type of reference book. Look up the word 'orange' and explain the difference in the information from that in the dictionary

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- ◆ Here is a list of purposes for different types of reading material.
 - ◆ Tick those uses which are most important for reference material.
 - ◆ Order the list of important uses of reference material from most important to least important. Give your reasons for the order you use.

Uses of Reading Material

- Enjoyment
- Information
- Detailed data about special areas of interest
- Advertising
- Analysis of daily events
- Creative writing such as stories
- Writers' opinions on a wide range of subjects
- Factual data
- Arguments about important social issues