# **Search Engine Race**

## Learning Objectives

* Students will be able to describe behavior of specific search tools regarding access to certain specific sources.
* Students will be able to find a specific citation in a specified research tool (Google or specific database).
* Students will be able to articulate why one search tool may be “better” than another for their assignment.

## Applicable Frame

### Searching as Strategic Exploration

* **Knowledge Practice**: design and refine needs and search strategies as necessary, based on search results;
* **Knowledge Practice**: use different types of searching language (e.g., controlled vocabulary, keywords, natural language) appropriately.
* **Knowledge Practice**: manage searching processes and results effectively.
* **Disposition**: exhibit mental flexibility and creativity
* **Disposition**: understand that first attempts at searching do not always produce adequate results

## Materials Needed

* Search Engines:
* Google
* Academic Search Complete (add Environment and Business)
* Proquest (click on “All Databases”)
* Gale General Reference Center
* Multiple cards with citations of sources found in the above search engines. The search engine that was used to find the citation will be clearly marked on the card and they will be numbered from 1 to # for each of the two library suggested search engines.
* Online timer (<http://www.online-stopwatch.com/countdown/>)

## Time Required

* This activity will take at least 40 minutes depending on class size and number of presentations in Final Round.

## Instructions

### **Round 1**

* Have the students sit in pairs.
* They need all 4 search engines open on their computer.
* Divide the entire classroom in half (keeping pairs together, of course!).
* Tell one side of the class that they will search in Google, the other will search in Academic Search Complete.
* Set a 3 minute timer on the screen at the front and hand out the citation cards for Academic Search Complete to everyone.
* Have the students search in their designated search tool for the source on the citation cards.
* When at least one person in a pair finds the full text of the source, one of the pair raises his/her hand and shows it to the instructor to verify and they are given a token.
* The 3 minute timer is reset.
* When the 3 minutes are up, the sides of the classroom switch search tools. Those who had been searching Google, now search Academic Search Complete and vice versa.
* Classroom instructors act as “judges” for the students to determine if they found the fulltext of the citation. The judge gives the pair a token if they are “correct.”

### **Round 2**

* After the 3 minutes are up, repeat the above steps for Proquest.
* After the end of Round 1 and 2, stop and discuss tips for database searching
  + Dropdowns for author/title/subject
  + Limit by years
  + Limit by fulltext

### **Round 3 Search Tool Free-for-all!**

* Students are told they can search in any of the 4 search engines at any time for the sources on the citation cards. (Gale General Reference Center has been added to the mix)
* Set a 5 minute timer on the front screen.
* Pass out citation cards to the students. Instructors verify the “fulltext” of articles or web page that matches the citation as students find it and show them to the instructor.
* If a pair finds all of the citations for this round, they receive an extra token and are given the citations they did not find from previous rounds.
* Classroom instructors act as “judges” for the students to determine if they found the location for the citation (fulltext or webpage). The judge gives the pair a token if they are “correct.”

## Reflection/Discussion Questions

* What strategies did you use to search for the sources?
* How were the search tools different?
* Why do you need multiple search tools?

## Final Round

* Students continue to work in the pairs.
* Students create a search strategy based on paragraph describing “cause and effect” assignment.
* Each can search different search tools, but both have to choose source.
* Students search have 5 minutes to find a “good” sources (relevant to assignment paragraph) in each of the 4 search engines and are award a token for each source.
* Each pair reports back to class and to instructor “judges” the results of 1 search tool used, the search strategy, and the sources found. (Information from group can be projected) (1 minute per group)
* Pair with highest score for presentation get 3 tokens, next highest 2 tokens, 3rd highest 1 token
* Judges award 1 token each also for best search and source.
  + Search strategy development (use of keywords, filters, etc)
  + Match between search strategy and sources (Relevance)

Winner of game is pair with most points from 3 searching rounds combined and the any points from the Final Round.

## Criteria/Scale for Final Round

Search reflects/relates to assignment topic.

Source relates to assignment topic.

Search uses keywords from assignment topic.

Source clearly demonstrates search keywords (keywords in title or abstract or subject headings)

Keywords are specific and include synonyms.

Student used truncation as appropriate.

Student did not use nonsense words like “a”, “the” “an”

Student used 2 or more limiters like fulltext/date/subject/title/langage to filter results.

## Variation B—Round 1 & 2 &3 only.

Earn the most tokens possible and receive a flash drive.

Round 1, 2, “rules”

1. Class is divided into pairs; and the room is divided in “half.”
2. Each pair will be given a group of “sources”--not in MLA format but “word descriptions of the source.”
3. Each pair will have 3 minutes to search their assigned search tool (database or Google) to find as many of the “sources” as possible.
4. The source found must be “full text.”
5. After 3 minutes, each pair will switch search tools and have another 3 minutes to find additional “sources.”
6. Either person in the pair may find the source--both do not have to.
7. Show the source to the instructor for verification and receive a token.
8. You do not have to search for the sources in any specific order.
9. You do not have to search for the same source.

Round 3

1. You will have 5 minutes to search.
2. You can choose any search tool you wish.

All tokens will be totaled to determine who wins the flash drive.