

Explorer WebQuest

A WebQuest for 3rd-5th Grade
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Introduction

This lesson was developed as part of a project begun in Centennial School District to teach Internet literacy skills to fifth grade students. The project began with the creation of a web site, **AllAboutExplorers.com**, which contains fictional biographies of world explorers, and a series of lessons designed to introduce students to the idea that the Internet is a less reliable source of information than print sources, and while there is an abundance of information available at our fingertips, researchers need to think critically about the facts found there.

This WebQuest is designed as a culminating activity for students to apply the beginning research and critical thinking skills they learned in other lessons to a real-world project.

Learners

This lesson is built around Pennsylvania language arts standards (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) and also addresses some social studies standards to a lesser extent.

Students participating in this activity should have prior understanding of a systematic research process and skills (such as those outlined in the Big6 model). They should also understand the issues involved in using various types of source materials, particularly in the reasons to be cautious when researching on the Internet. A good foundation for these skills are the introductory lessons and Treasure Hunts found at AllAboutExplorers.com.

Curriculum Standards

Language Arts Standards Addressed

- Use and understand a variety of media and evaluate the quality of material produced (PA Academic Standard 1.2.5B)
- Write persuasive pieces with a clearly stated position or opinion and supporting detail, citing sources when needed (1.4.5C)
- Speak using skills appropriate to formal speech situations (1.6.5C)
- Locate information using appropriate sources and strategies (1.8.5B)
- Organize and present the main ideas from research (1.8.5C)

Social Studies Standards Addressed

- Describe and explain historical research (PA Academic Standard 8.1.6D)
- Identify and explain how individuals and groups made significant political and cultural contributions to United States and world history (8.3.6A and 8.4.6A)

In addition to these academic learning outcomes, students will also practice skills in critical thinking, creative production, comparison, and teamwork.

Process

This project will take approximately 10 class sessions depending on the level of detail you want the students to provide in their final presentation. Sessions can be taught on separate days or may be combined into one longer instructional period depending on the needs of the students.

Divide students into teams of 3-4. Each team will work together on all three phases of the project. Provide each team with a folder containing the following:

- Printed instruction packet for the project
- 4 copies of Big6 Data chart for Phase 1 (2-sided)
- 4 copies of Big6 Data chart for Phase 2
- 6 bibliography slips (keep extras on hand in the classroom)

Collect this folder at the end of the project as part of the lesson assessment.

Note that links to all Internet sources required for student research are located at the project web site: <http://www.allaboutexplorers.com/webquest/webquest.html>

Phase 1: World Holidays (2 class sessions, 45-60 minutes each)

In this phase, students will learn as much as they can about how we honor people with holidays.

Have students each select one of the holidays from the list below. Each person in a team should have a different holiday. Encourage teams to select at least one US and one world holiday among the team members.

U.S. Holidays	World Holidays
Martin Luther King Day President's Day Columbus Day Veteran's Day Memorial Day	Boxing Day (United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Canada) Guadalupe Day (Mexico) Guy Fawkes Day (United Kingdom) St. Lucia Day (Sweden) Shichi-Go-San (Japan)

1. Students will do research individually at first. They must use at least **two sources** (one Internet and one print) to gather information about the holiday to complete the Big6 Data Chart for Phase 1. Have them complete bibliography slips as they go along—it is helpful to spot check this early in the process so that you can ensure students are recording their sources right away.
2. Once all the team members are done, they should reassemble and compare notes. The team will work together to complete *one* copy of the comparison chart on the back of the Phase 1 Data Chart.

Phase 2: Choosing an Explorer (3 class sessions, 45-60 minutes each)

In the next step, each team will identify one explorer who is worthy of being honored with a new holiday and to learn about that person so they can design an appropriate celebration.

1. Provide a list of explorers from which teams may select. Choose explorers for the list based on available resources in your school library so that you can ensure students have adequate print sources for their research.
2. Help teams plan how to cooperatively assign tasks for completing the necessary research and filling out the Phase 2 Data Chart. Teams might assign each person to study one source and answer several questions, or each person could be responsible for one question and locate the answer in various sources. As before, there must be at least **two sources** (one Internet and one print) to answer each question, though the same source can certainly provide information to answer more than one of the questions. Remind students to record their sources on bibliography slips. **Also remind students that all the biographies at AllAboutExplorers.com are fictional and should not be used for their research here.**
3. Assist teams in generating a list of aspects of their explorers that are worth celebrating based on their research. They may include whatever other interesting facts they found that might be relevant.

4. Teams should also at this point begin creating a map of the explorer's voyages. The map should be hand-drawn in color on paper at least 8 ½" by 11".

Phase 3: Developing The Presentation (5 class sessions, 45-60 minutes each)

The last step is to create a presentation for a committee of state legislators to persuade them that the team's plan for a new holiday should be adopted. The role of the committee will be played by a group of teachers and students from our class. You might consider enlisting the support of a few other teachers to participate by listening to the presentations and being part of the "committee."

1. Review the rules and expectations for brainstorming with students if necessary. Remind them that all ideas are accepted and recorded. Then give the teams time to generate ideas about what they want their celebrations to be like. Encourage teams to model their ideas after the holidays researched in Phase 1 and be sure they incorporate the qualities of their explorer identified in Phase 2.
2. The process of evaluating ideas against a list of criteria might be new for your students. Discuss ways they might come up with criteria. Share a few specific things they might consider (from the list on the student instruction page), and perhaps work as a whole group to list some other options. Remind students that they must be persuasive, so the criteria should be selected from the legislator's point of view, not necessarily their own.
3. Each group will then create a list of criteria for evaluating their celebration ideas. They will then use your criteria to narrow their list of ideas.
4. Next, each group will begin to design their holiday celebration. Help them keep the celebration realistic and focused. They can think big and be creative, but it is easy to go off on a tangent and forget the purpose of the celebration is to honor a famous person, not just to have a big party. Help them remember to keep their choices relevant to honoring their explorer.
5. Explain the requirements for the oral presentation:
 - The oral presentation must involve all members of the group
 - It must last between 5 and 10 minutes
 - You must make a persuasive argument for both your selection of explorer and your design of the celebration
 - You must incorporate some technology into your presentation. This could include word processing, a graph made with Excel, a PowerPoint slide show, using Inspiration to create your visual , etc.
 - Your presentation must have one visual. This could be a map, picture of the explorer, poster, chart, PowerPoint, etc.
6. Remind students that they will be turning in their folders at the end with the following items:
 - A written outline of your presentation
 - Data charts from Phase 1 and Phase 2
 - Group notes and brainstorming from Phase 3
 - Bibliography slips including all sources used during your research

- A map showing the explorer's voyages

Variations

As an alternative to each team developing a separate celebration, the presentations could focus simply on the selection of the most worthy explorer to honor, and then the class could work as a large group to plan a celebration—each team might then be responsible for one aspect of planning.

Resources Needed

Describe what's needed to implement this lesson. Some of the possibilities:

- Class sets of books
- E-mail accounts for all students
- Specific software (how many copies?)
- Specific hardware (what kind? How many?)
- Specific reference material in the classroom or school library
- Video or audio materials

If the lesson makes extensive use of specific websites, it would be appropriate to list, describe and link them here. It would also be helpful to link the names of books suggested to [Amazon](#) or other online sources.

Describe also the *human* resources needed. how many teachers are needed to implement the lesson. Is one enough? Is there a role for aides or parents in the room? Do you need to coordinate with a teacher at another school? With a partner in industry or a museum or other entity? Is a field trip designed in as part of the lesson?

Evaluation

How will you know that this lesson was successful? Describe what student products or performances you'll be looking at and how they'll be evaluated. This, of course, should be tightly related to the standards and objectives you cited above.

Students will be evaluated according to the rubric below. Encourage students to use this as a guide while working to be sure they are meeting all the criteria.

	Below Basic 1	Basic 2	Proficient 3	Advanced 4	Score
Creativity of Design					
Completeness of Design					
Quality of Oral					

Presentation					
Persuasiveness of Proposal					

Credits & References

Thanks to the Centennial School District for supporting this project by allowing us time to develop the All About Explorers web site, create the lessons, and field test all the activities. Thanks also to Centennial teacher-librarians Nancy Ring, Jack McAvoy, Chris Shepper, Joanne Brown, and George Fisher for assistance with writing biographies and field testing activities. Special thanks to Dr. Jenny without whom none of this would have been conceivable, let alone possible.

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