

SHAKESPEARE ON THE INTERNET – DIGITAL LITERACY

Age: Young adults / Adults



Level: Upper intermediate–Advanced

Time: Approx. 60 minutes

Materials: one copy of the worksheet per student; computer, projector and internet access; if possible, students' own mobiles or tablets with internet access, or access to the school computer lab

Aims: In this lesson, the students will:

- learn about using databases and electronic journals;
- learn about using free online sources;
- learn about how to evaluate online content;
- practise reviewing a website.

Summary: This lesson is designed to introduce students to some online sources they can use as references in their assessed work. It has a strong focus on the importance of selecting appropriate and credible digital sources. Teachers working in Higher Education (HE) institutions may also use this lesson to teach or remind their students how to access online journals and databases available through their own university library websites. It also gives students the opportunity to explore online websites devoted to Shakespeare and his work and thus potentially increase their familiarity with the Bard. The homework focuses on evaluating some selected sources and collecting potentially useful information from them.



TEACHING TIP: Although the lessons in this series were designed with EAP learners at foundation programmes and undergraduate level in mind, they can also be used with advanced language learners and in English language teacher training and CPD programmes to prepare staff to teach Shakespeare themselves in the future.

ACTIVITY 1 – SPEAKING

Aims: contextualization; to prepare for the lesson activities

Approximate time: 15 mins

PROCEDURE:

1. If you used Lesson 5, refer back to the homework and start by asking your students to share the websites they found. Ask if the ones in the screenshots in activity 1 are among them.
2. Hand out the worksheets. Ask students to look at the screenshots of different websites that provide resources on Shakespeare. If you have access to a computer with internet access and a projector, you

can show the websites by briefly navigating them.

- A: www.bl.uk/shakespeare
- B: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Shakespeare
- C: literature.proquest.com/
- D: <http://universitypublishingonline.org/cambridge/shakespeare/>

3. Students discuss the questions.

4. Have a whole-class discussion. Point out that:

- A is an extremely good resource as it is a webpage from the British Library. All of the content is freely available.
- B is Wikipedia. Although there may be some useful and accurate information there, these pages are written by multiple contributors and the veracity and quality of the information cannot be verified. Students can read it for general information but **Wikipedia cannot be used as a reference in an academic essay.**
- C and D are online databases for academic articles and electronic journals. Students can only gain full access to the sites via their institutions' libraries and those need to have a subscription to these sources.

ACTIVITY 2 – LISTENING

Aims: to present students with some basic principles when evaluating sources; to prepare for the reading activity; to practise listening and taking notes

Approximate time: 15 mins

PROCEDURE:

1. Set the context for the listening. This is an educator giving some tips about assessing the credibility of online sources in general.
2. Play the recording once. Ask students to take notes.
3. Ask students to compare their notes.
4. Play the video again so students can check the accuracy of their notes and write down some extra information from the second listening.
5. Ask students to share with the whole group their views on the content of the video and say whether they think the tips are useful or not.

Link: www.youtube.com/watch?v=PLTOVoHbH5c

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THINK CRITICALLY

Each lesson in this series has one or two Think critically boxes to give students some food for thought. Teachers don't need to 'do' anything with the content in the box. However, if you have time or think that your students need to improve their understanding of the concept of credibility when related to an academic source, it might be worth going through the information with them.

Possible answers:

- generally speaking, the background of the writer, the publisher or organization responsible for the publication of the book, article, website, etc, the transparency regarding the sources of the information provided, and the presence of references
- economic, political and ideological interests of individuals and organizations that may conflict with the results and purpose of the article or research
- Arguments can be made for both sides – let your students think about it. Here are some links on the debate:
 - <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/may/01/open-free-access-academic-research>
 - archive/2014/11/why-isnt-academic-research-free-to-everyone/382917/

Possible answers:

- Students are unable to evaluate online resources; students are capable of discerning what information on the web is reliable but prefer to do little work and use easily accessible resources even if they are not the best options.
- with references to research papers on the topic, for example '(Grimes and Boening, 2001)' and 'D'Esposito and Gardner (1999)'

ACTIVITY 4 – PRACTICE

Aims: to give students the opportunity to access and evaluate some websites in the classroom with some guidance; to critically discuss the resources available; to prepare for the homework

Approximate time: 20 mins

PROCEDURE:

- You will need internet access in class to be able to do this activity.
- Using their mobile devices or the computer lab, students should briefly access the websites from Activity 1 and complete the table.
- Circulate to monitor and help students with access, if necessary.
- Ask students to compare their notes in pairs or small groups.
- You may want to discuss with the whole group how to access electronic journals and databases in your institution.

ACTIVITY 3 – READING

Aims: to practise reading academic papers; to think critically on the concept of assessing and citing online; to open a debate on students' own practices

Approximate time: 15 mins

PROCEDURE:

- Give instructions according to the rubric on the worksheet. Clarify, if needed.
- Ask students to read the extracts silently and individually in the light of the questions.
- Ask students to highlight the answers for the two first questions.
- Discuss the answers with the whole group.

HOMEWORK & INDEPENDENT LEARNING

Aims: to foster independent learning; to do online research; to help students develop their critical thinking skills when selecting material online; to provide students with credible sources they can use for their academic work

Approximate independent study time: 120 mins

PROCEDURE:

- Set the activity according to the rubric. Assign different websites to different students or groups of students. See possible links below.
- Highlight the importance of thinking critically about the sources.
- Highlight the importance of taking notes and copying quotable passages that students can add to their future assignments.
- Ask students to bring notes to class and/or post them to your discussion group or group blog if you have one.

EAP Shakespeare

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LINKS:

FREE SOURCES	SUBSCRIPTION SOURCES
internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/	universitypublishingonline.org/cambridge/companions/
findingshakespeare.co.uk/	http://universitypublishingonline.org/cambridge/shakespeare/
podcasts.ox.ac.uk/series/approaching-shakespeare	labs.jstor.org/shakespeare/
www.opensourceshakespeare.org/concordance/	http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rshk20/current
www.bbc.co.uk/timelines/z8k2p39	
www.shakespeareportal.com/	

TEACHER'S NOTES

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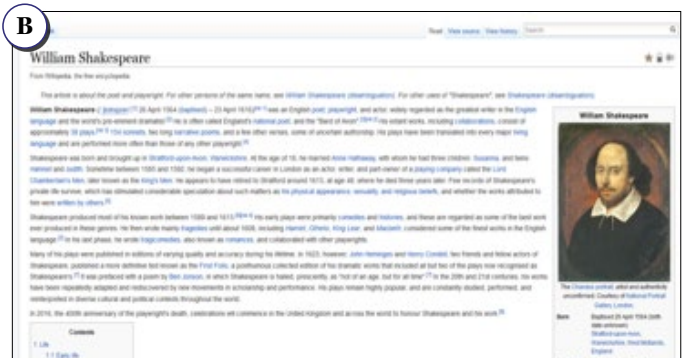
Aims: In this lesson, you will:

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ACTIVITY 1 – SPEAKING

Look at the screenshots. Discuss the questions below:

- What sort of content and features do you expect to find on each of the websites?
- How likely are you to use any of these sources?



ACTIVITY 2 – LISTENING

Watch a short video where a librarian talks about evaluating sources for credibility. Take notes on the most important points.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=PLTOVoHbH5c

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THINK CRITICALLY

The most frequent academic reference sources are books and journal articles. However, there is quite a lot of material available and you have to be able to identify which sources are reliable and can be useful for your essay writing. Also, consider some aspects related to academic publications:

1. What makes a source credible?
2. What can be potential sources of bias?
3. Should academic sources be freely available (open-source) in order to disseminate knowledge?

ACTIVITY 3 – READING

Read an extract of from paper on how students evaluate online sources. Discuss the questions below:

- What are the two main positions on the issue?
- How does the writer support the information provided?
- Which position do you take on the issue? Why?

Given the variety of reactions to the role of non-academic public domain items in academic research, it is not surprising that opinions about whether or not students have and exercise the capacity to evaluate online resources (of any type) also vary. Grimes and Boening determine that students are either unwilling or unable to evaluate online resources (Grimes and Boening, 2001). Tenopir (2003) suggests that students may just not know how to evaluate web sites, as does Dolowitz (2007).

In contrast, D’Esposito and Gardner (1999) determine that students are aware of the need to discern what information on the web is reliable. Tillotson also finds that “students view web sources critically and are aware of standard web site evaluation criteria” (Tillotson, 2002, p. 392). Meola suggests that librarians attribute an “exaggerated ignorance to students” regarding their ability to evaluate web sites, and that “use of web resources may reflect students’ desire to do as little work as possible rather than their inability to evaluate information” (Meola, 2004, p. 334). And a recent study by Metz also concludes that students can determine the difference between “scholarly and non-academic sources” but that ease of access is an important factor in how students select the resources they use (Metz, 2006, p. 36).

Dahl, C., 2009. Undergraduate research in the public domain: the evaluation of non-academic sources online. *Reference Services Review*, 37(2), pp.155–163.

ACTIVITY 4 – PRACTICE

Access the websites A–D from Activity 1. For each one, answer the questions below.

		A	B	C	D
1.	What is the site’s URL?				
2.	What organization publishes it?				
3.	Who are the people contributing to it?				
4.	What kind of material do you find on the website?				

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5.	Is the information accurate and objective?				
6.	Is it a free source or does it require subscription?				
7.	Can you use this source as a reference in an essay?				

HOMEWORK & INDEPENDENT LEARNING

Your tutor will assign a specific online Shakespearean source to you. They are all credible sources. Some of them are highly academic while others are intended for the general public but still contain valuable and reliable information. Use the evaluation form to take notes on the website assigned to you. Report back to the group on your findings in your next lesson.

source title		URL	
type of source <input type="checkbox"/> database <input type="checkbox"/> online journal <input type="checkbox"/> website <input type="checkbox"/> blog		publisher <input type="checkbox"/> academic journal <input type="checkbox"/> academic institution <input type="checkbox"/> educational organization <input type="checkbox"/> individual academic <input type="checkbox"/> governmental organization <input type="checkbox"/> commercial company <input type="checkbox"/> broadsheet newspaper <input type="checkbox"/> BBC <input type="checkbox"/> other _____	
last update _____			
contact _____			
negative aspects		positive aspects	
ideas and quotes I can use in my essays			