



Thomson Gale provides *Kids Info Bits* as a developmentally appropriate graphic interface for children in elementary school. The sources for this database include the Columbia Encyclopedia, Merriam-Webster Dictionary, Junior Worldmark Encyclopedias, and several reference sources offered by Blackbirch Press.



## Searching

There are three ways for students to search through the database.

- An icon on the home page represents each general topic. Children click on the icon representing the topic they are studying. This will lead them to another graphical list of subtopics. In this manner children can explore a topic through subject terms until they are presented with a tabbed results page.
- A search box is presented at the top of the home page. Students may type keywords related to their topic in this interface and then press the “search” button. For a successful search, fewer keywords usually work best. If more than one keyword is used, it is recommended that the most important word be used first. For example, when searching for Colin Powell the student should type in Powell, Colin. Usually a keyword search will result in a *Subject Guide* list. Each item on the list will have a **VIEW** and/or **SEE** button. The “view” feature will lead students to a tabbed results page. While the “see” button will lead students to additional search headings.
- Kids Info Bits has an Advanced Search option. On the bottom of the page click the hyperlink for the Advanced Search. Here students can limit their search based on title, sources, author, subject, document type, publication date, reading level or full text availability. Each document in this database has a specific identifying number. If a student thinks they will need access to an article again they may record this number.

### Advanced Search

Enter search term(s) and select index type.  
Indicate choice of Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT)

in

in

in

**SEARCH** **CLEAR FORM**

#### Date of Publication

Note: entering a date or range of dates will limit your search to newspapers and periodicals only.

From (m)  (d)  (yyyy)   
To (m)  (d)  (yyyy)

Document Type:

Reading Level:

Document Number:

Return this number of results per page:

**SEARCH** **CLEAR FORM**

## Results

The tabbed results page lists all results from the different types of sources available. The tab categories are: *Reference*, *Magazines*, *Newspapers*, *Maps, Flags & Seals*, *Charts & Graphs*, and *Images*. Each tab refers to the type of results given: *Reference* will list all results from encyclopedias; *Magazines* will list magazine articles on the topic and so on. If there are no results under a certain tab then that tab will be grayed out. Above the tabbed results is a list of hyperlinks showing the student every level of their search.



Each source used in this database has been assigned one of two reading level recommendations: “easy” and “more difficult”. The “easy” designation is given to sources geared to K-2 audiences. If a reference is deemed appropriate for all elementary readers it is also given the “easy” designation. “More difficult” is given to sources geared to grade 3 and above readers.



Results can be saved during the session in the “My Backpack” feature. This will help students compile a bibliography or just a search list. Click the checkbox next to the title to place the article in the backpack. Clicking the box again will remove the article from the backpack. [Put in My Backpack](#)

## Other Features

The Merriam- Webster Elementary Dictionary is available for students search through. Click on the Dictionary hyperlink at the top or bottom of the home page. Students may browse the Dictionary by typing a letter then an asterisk (\*). Terms will appear alphabetically, students can click the term to see the definition.



Another handy tool for both students and educators is the InfoMark. An InfoMark on the top of any page means that a persistent URL is available for that page. The URL can be copied and saved and the page can then be accessed easily later. One use for a persistent URL is to save a search. Once a successful search has been defined, save the InfoMark for the results page. Any time the InfoMark is used the search is run again and any new information for the defined search will be listed.

The Teacher Toolbox offers helpful resources for educators to use and/or share with their students. Teachers can download helpful worksheets that guide students through judging information, choosing a topic, citing a source and more. The Teacher Toolbox may be accessed from hyperlinks at the top and bottom of the home page.

## Search Tips

- For general searches use fewer search terms. Use more search terms for narrower search terms. For example: If a student is interested in DNA, yet does not

currently know specifics on the topic then, the search term “DNA” will give a broad range to introduce the student to the subject. If the student is studying native spiders in Alabama then simply using the search term “spider” would be too broad. A possible search for this would be “spider alabama native”. Note that the Kids Info Bits search feature is not case sensitive.

- Avoid stopwords. Either enclose phrases that have stopwords in quotation marks or eliminate stopwords from the phrase. Example: To search for *looking to the future*, either use “*looking to the future*” or *looking future*.
- Wildcards may be used. If a student is unsure how a word or name is spelled, use the first few letters and follow by an asterisk (\*).
- Use date ranges to search for multiple years. Example: to search for any year in the 1960s, use 1960 – 1969.
- Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT) may be used. It does not matter if these are in all caps. Use AND to retrieve results that contain both terms. The terms will not necessarily be in close proximity to each other. Use OR to retrieve results with one or both of the search terms. Use NOT to limit the search to results that do not contain the specific term. Example: *Python NOT Monty* will give results that contain the term python but not the term monty.