

Definition of a WebQuest: “A WebQuest is an inquiry-oriented activity in which some or all of the information that learners interact with comes from resources on the internet”ⁱ

Why Use a WebQuest?

1. *They look good on paper!*
 - a. WebQuests cover those trendy education words such as *critical thinking, cooperative learning, authentic assessment, scaffolding, and technology integration*.
2. *They increase Student Motivation & Authenticity*ⁱⁱ
 - a. First, WebQuests use a central question that honestly needs answering.
 - b. students are given real resources to work with, rather than a dated textbook, filtered encyclopedias or middle-of-the-road magazines
3. *They help develop higher-order thinking skills*ⁱⁱⁱ
 - a. They force students to transform information into something else: a cluster that maps out the main issues, a comparison, a hypothesis, a solution, etc.
 - b. They use scaffolding by breaking the task into meaningful "chunks" and asking students to undertake specific sub-tasks, or roles.
4. *They promote cooperative learning*

Are WebQuests really that effective?

A Series of scientific studies have proven the overall effectiveness of WebQuests:

STUDY ONE: A scientific study and survey given to students in a geography class who had to complete a webquest and create a digital video drew the following conclusions:^{iv}

1. Use of a WebQuest helps and guides group members in their investigation work and in the production of their videos.
2. It motivates group members to learn in a different manner, and in collaboration with others.
3. It helps them to divide the load of the task among the members of the group.
4. It helps them to seek solutions, share their information and to take into account the information of others.
5. It contributes towards each group member working at his task.

STUDY TWO: Another scientific study introduced students to a four-week webquest and produced the following results^v:

1. **POSITIVES of webquest:**
 - a. Many students preferred working with others.
 - b. Many students were excited to search and explore new ideas/information because of the relevance of the topic.
 - c. Many students split up the tasks in order to finish on time (divide and conquer).
 - d. Many students collaborated outside of their own groups to obtain information (though this could be a negative outcome as it might encourage cheating)
 - e. Students that were reluctant to do research on the Internet watched their peers and, as time passed, became more involved.^{vi}
2. **NEGATIVES of webquest:**
 - a. Students liked the group activity in the beginning, but lost the energy as time went on. In this case, the group dynamics deteriorated.
 - b. Certain students exhibited signs of frustration with the group, feeling that they were carrying the workload of other students.

What are some pitfalls to avoid when using a WebQuest?

1. *Make Connections*^{vii}
 - a. The most important factor related to student learning and technology use is how teachers relate the technology-based activity to other learning activities.
 - b. Clearly link your WebQuest to previous and subsequent activities
2. *Jigsaw the WebQuest*^{viii}
 - a. Each student in the group should have a different role or task; a piece of the puzzle.
 - b. Student roles and tasks must be clearly defined and equal in responsibility and workload.
3. *Make students individually accountable*^{ix}:
 - a. during class: require students to maintain a daily journal to track the accomplishments of the individual student, as well as be used as a task sheet where students log what sites and tasks were completed during the class period
 - b. Product: EACH student should be responsible for an authentic product that must be completely independently and handed in during the course of the Web Quest. It should be role-related.^x

How do we address technology limitations?^{xi}

1. *No computers*
 - a. You can print out the Web pages for their students to use in class. The fun of computers and Web work can be lost, but perhaps other aspects of the learning experience can be used to increase student motivation.
2. *One computer with Net Access*
 - a. Teachers in a one-computer classroom can pair students up and create a modular classroom for working on their WebQuests.
 - b. One rotating station could be the online computer, one could use print-outs from Web pages, another group could use library books, magazines, videotapes, CD-ROMs, etc.
 - c. Students in this scenario would be in a good position to evaluate whether Web access made a difference.
3. *Few Computers*
 - a. If you have Internet access in your schools, but perhaps lack a sufficient number of computers, you might also try pairing students up for each role (therefore five roles could support ten students).
 - b. You might also look for access to an online computer lab that might be available for a few class sessions.

ⁱ Dodge, B. (1995). "Some Thoughts about Webquests." [online] http://edWeb.sdsu.edu/courses/edtec596/about_Webquests.html (August 2003).

ⁱⁱ March, Tom (1998). "Why Webquests?" [online] http://tommmarch.com/writings/intro_wq.php (February 2010).

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} Lara, S, and Ch. Repáraz. (2005). "Effectiveness of Cooperative Learning: WebQuest as a Tool to Produce Scientific Videos." [online] <http://www.formatex.org/micte2005/294.pdf> (February 2010).

^v Dunnagan, Emily, et. al. "Action Research Project: WebQuests and their Effectiveness in the Classroom." [online] <http://imet.csus.edu/classic/imet2/dunnagane/eportfolio/ar.pdf> (February 2010).

^{vi} Ibid.

^{vii} March, Tom (1998). "Why Webquests?" [online] http://tommmarch.com/writings/intro_wq.php (February 2010).

^{viii} Ibid.

^{ix} Ibid.

^x Ibid.

^{xi} Ibid.

Methods for creating a Webquest:

<u>Method</u>	<u>Pros</u>	<u>Cons</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Needs</u>
Preferred: Post your webquest online Desc: This is the most common method. It is also is the reason and purpose for which the “Webquest” was invented in the first place.	--Highly interactive --more fun --More engaging -- teaches students that there are other things you can do with the internet besides Face book. --Most webquest sites are user-friendly, and take you through the process step by step.	--NOT FREE --You need a host server (website) to post this to, and that often requires a fee. --they cost an annual fee beginning around \$20.	\$20/year minimum (although there are some free sites listed on the “resources” handout	-Internet Access -Host Server
Traditional: Print out your webquest and hand it to your students Desc: websites such as http://ilearn.senecac.on.ca/elc/wgg/index.html let you fill in the parts of a webquest, save them to your computer, and print them out for your students.	--FREE!! --Still follows the structure of a Webquest (Introduction, Task, Process, Resources, Evaluation, and Conclusion) --Easier for less tech savvy teachers	-- takes away the interactive element that makes webquests more “fun” --basically makes it a “regular” assignment. --Students do not receive the full effect of an interactive webquest.	FREE	-Internet Access -Copies

<p>Unique: Use Microsoft Word to create a Webquest.</p> <p>Desc: You can create a Webquest with workable links using this basic program.</p>	<p>--It's FREE</p> <p>--It includes the same steps, same results, and can look almost identical to an online Webquest.</p>	<p>--This will take more time to complete, depending on your familiarity with Microsoft Word.</p> <p>--It may never look as "cool" or engaging as a Webquest host site</p> <p>--Students can manipulate or edit this Word document, which means they may accidentally delete parts.</p>	<p>FREE</p>	<p>-Internet Access</p> <p>-Someplace to post your Word document for students to access</p> <p>---have your school technology department post it on the school website</p> <p>--- use a site called, "Google Docs" (www.docs.google.com) where you can upload your Word document, give your students the link, and they can access it. You only need to create an account for FREE. OR, use www.wikispaces.com</p>
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ONLINE Webquest Hosting Sites

Name of Website	Web Address	Description	Cost
Questgarden	www.questgarden.com	This is a great introductory, easy-to-use site for creating AND searching for webquests. PLUS, as a subscriber you can import webquests created by others and modify them to your liking.	\$20/two years HIGHLY RECOMMENDED
Zunal.com	http://zunal.com/index.php	This site is much more interactive than Teachnology, and easier to use than Filamentality. There is also an option to add a quiz to the webquest. Very effective	FREE RECOMMENDED
Filamentality	http://www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/fil/	This guides you through the process of how to create a webquest, but is a little more complicated. You need to create an account first, and then it takes some getting used to, but it's effective once you get the hang of it.	Free SOMEWHAT RECOMMEND
Teachnology	http://teachers.teach-nology.com/web_tools/web_quest/	A very simple, one-page site that lets you fill in the steps of your webquest. Good for printing out your webquest for students.	FREE RECOMMENDED

Miscellaneous Webquest Resources

Name of Website	Web Address	description	Cost
Web Quest Templates	http://webquest.sdsu.edu/LessonTemplate.html	This site provides various ways to lay out your web quest. Most of them can be adapted to a Microsoft Word document as well.	FREE HIGHLY RECOMMEND
Webquest Tutorial	http://www.teachersfirst.com/summer/webquest/quest-a.shtml	This site is an excellent step-by-step tutorial that explains the benefits of a webquest, how to prepare one, the steps involved, and finally some examples and templates are provided.	FREE HIGHLY RECOMMEND
Web Quest Portals	http://questgarden.com/author/examplestop.php http://bestwebquests.com/ http://eduscapes.com/tap/topic4.htm#1 http://www.techtrekers.com/webquests/ http://chalk.richmond.edu/education/projects/	These are sites where you can search through thousands of previously-made webquests. These are great starting points.	FREE HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

