

QEGS Policy on Independent Research

When undertaking a piece of research, students should refer to at least two different sources of information which should be acknowledged*.

The class teacher should make it clear when setting the work whether these may both be taken from the internet.

* It is a minimum requirement that the book title and author, newspaper and date, or website used should be given.

Undertaking research:

Before you start:

- Be absolutely clear about what you are supposed to find out
- Decide on the best sources: in most cases it is advisable to consult both electronic and printed resources.
- If you are unsure about resources ask for help in the school library.



Using internet resources:

- Think carefully about what words or phrases you put into the search engine.
- Do you want to use sources from all over the world or just from the UK?
- Do you want to use older sources or more recent ones, e.g. from the last year?
- Consider a research question regarding the benefits and dangers of fracking. What would you put into the search engine? Sources from which countries? From which dates? (Demonstrate this on the board, using Google).

Evaluating internet sources - Wikipedia:

- Consider the benefits and limitations of Wikipedia by looking up “Penrith” in Wikipedia.
- Pick on one aspect. Is the content accurate? Is there fact presented as opinion? Are there things which should have been included but aren’t?
- Look at the “edit”, “view history” and “talk” buttons
- Look for “ISIS” in Wikipedia and again look at the “edit”, “view history” and “talk” buttons
- **Conclusion: Do not use Wikipedia unless you have checked out the page history**

Evaluating other internet sources:

- Who has written the text?
- Do they have a political or commercial or other biased interest?
- Are they a respected academic or maybe an opinionated busybody?
Check them out. (*Demonstrate how*)
- Discuss how articles get onto the first page of a google search, e.g. through Google Adwords.
- Look at more than just the first Google page!



Evaluating printed sources:

- Who has written the text?
- Do they have a political or commercial or other biased interest?
- Are they a respected academic or maybe an opinionated busybody? Check them out.
- How recent is the publication? This may influence your research into fracking, but probably not into “Midsummer Night’s Dream”. But how about “Richard III”?
- Is the publication itself biased? Are you likely to find an article criticising the pope in the “Catholic Herald?”

