TIPS FOR STUDENTS FOR ONLINE RESEARCH
K-5th Grade English Language Arts

Please note: For younger students, parents, guardians, and/or older family members can assist with online research.

1. **Ask good questions**

   Putting the right words into the search box is incredibly important for finding high-quality sources. When doing online research, it's incredibly important to carefully choose the words you use, and to try different words, to get the best information.

2. **Be as specific as possible**

   Let's pretend you want to learn more about Barack Obama. If you put "Barack Obama" in the online search box, you will have to search through many pages, most of which aren't important. Instead, you should narrow your search for exactly what you want to know, such as "Barack Obama's childhood." Even better is to enter specific questions, such as, "Where did Barack Obama grow up?"

3. **Check your sources**

   Just because something is on the internet doesn't mean it is reliable or true. When doing online research, it is important to stop and think about the validity and reliability of a website. Ask yourself:
   - Does the website come from a trusted source?
   - Is the information in-depth?
   - Is the information on the website up to date?

   Websites from museums, known companies (i.e. National Geographic), government organizations, and/or schools are most often reliable. Websites from individual people or organizations with far right/left views should be used with caution, and Wikipedia should be used with caution. Do not use websites that ask for personal information or prompt virus warnings.

4. **Go beyond the surface**

   It is often tempting to pick the first source that shows up, but it's important to look at a variety of sources. We recommend using at least two to three sources to find information about a particular topic. This will require patience. Sometimes finding the right information will take a bit of time, and that's okay.

5. **Record your sources**

   It's important to keep track of where you find information, especially when writing research reports. Copying facts right from the internet without providing the source is called plagiarism, and is not allowed. When you find information you want to use, make sure to paraphrase the information and cite, or make note of, where the information came from.