

LESSON PLAN 54: GOOGLEWHACKING

Objective: Find a two-word search query with a single, solitary result in Google!

Age range: 12-17

WHAT IS GOOGLEWHACKING?

A 'Googlewhack' is an attempt to find a Google search query consisting of two words that return just one hit result. The ultimate goal of a Googlewhacker is to see the words 'Results 1-1 of 1' appear in the upper right-hand corner of the screen.

Googlewhacks have included such literary gems as:

- ambidextrous scallywags;
- illuminatus ombudsman;
- panfish interrogation; and
- antiestablishmentarianism psycho.

Of course, published Googlewhacks are shortlived. As soon as they're added to a website, the number of 'hits' will become at least two (one for the original and one for the publishing site!).

WHY DO IT?

Well, essentially Googlewhacking is about having fun with words and search. However, it also provides an opportunity to explore how Web searching works, and how it can be manipulated



RULES FOR THE GOOGLEWHACKER

These are fairly simple. You must use actual words found in answers.com, but no punctuation and no numbers. Words must be between four and 30 characters in length. The result page must be an actual article or webpage with information not just a list of words.

YOU WILL NEED

Computer, Internet access, Web browser

DEVELOPING SKILLS

Literacy, word usage, Web search, investigation, problem solving.

METHOD

1. Talk to your students about search engines, what they do, and how they do it.
2. Explain why webpages appear in search results. Introduce the idea of 'refining' results by altering the search terms, and discuss how and why it can happen.
3. Describe a Googlewhack, go over the rules, and discuss how one can be achieved.
4. Identify potential words and strategies for making a successful Googlewhack.



5. Go to Google and give it a go.
6. If your search terms don't result in a Googlewhack, look at the reasons why and how they could be changed and improved.
7. If you think you've found one, check it at googlewhack.com (the site also has a lot of information about the activity). If you're successful, your Googlewhack will be added to the site's 'Whack Stack' – and why not tell us about it, too!



ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Another result you could try to achieve is a Googlewhackblatt, which is similar to a Googlewhack except that it involves finding a single word that produces only one Google search result. Or how about finding Antegoogwhackblatts, words that do not produce any Google search results?

MORE ON GOOGLEWHACKS

There are a number of videos on YouTube that look at the subject of Googlewhacks. A couple you could try are:

- My Googlewhack Adventure
- Googlewhacks for Fun and Profit