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# **1. HOW TO DESIGN WEB QUESTS**

Most of this advice is a paraphrase by Tony Ambrose (of UM-St.Louis) of the work done by Bernie Dodge (of San Diego State University).

WebQuests of either short or long duration are deliberately designed to make the best use of a learner's time. There is questionable educational benefit in having learners surfing the net without a clear task in mind, and most schools must ration student connect time severely. To achieve that efficiency and clarity of purpose, WebQuests should contain at least the following parts:

1. An **introduction** that sets the stage and provides some background information.
2. A **task** that is doable and interesting.
3. A set of **information sources** needed to complete the task. Many (though not necessarily all) of the resources are embedded in the WebQuest document itself as anchors pointing to information on the World Wide Web. Information sources might include web documents, experts available via e-mail or realtime conferencing, searchable databases on the net, and books and other documents physically available in the learner's setting. Because pointers to resources are included, the learner is not left to wander through webspace completely adrift.
4. A description of the **process** the learners should go through in accomplishing the task. The process should be broken out into clearly described steps.
5. Some **guidance** on how to organize the information acquired. This can take the form of guiding questions, or directions to complete organizational frameworks such as timelines, concept maps, or cause-and-effect diagrams as described by Marzano (1988, 1992) and Clarke (1990).
6. A **conclusion** that brings closure to the quest, reminds the learners about what they've learned, and perhaps encourages them to extend the experience into other domains.

Some other non-critical attributes of a WebQuest include these:

1. WebQuests are most likely to be **group activities**, although one could imagine solo quests that might be applicable in distance education or library settings.
2. WebQuests might be enhanced by wrapping **motivational elements** around the basic structure by giving the learners a role to play (e.g., scientist, detective, reporter), simulated personae to interact with via e-mail, and a scenario to work within (e.g., you've been asked by the Secretary General of the UN to brief him on what's happening in sub-Saharan Africa this week.)
3. WebQuests can be designed within a **single discipline** or they can be **interdisciplinary**. Given that designing effective interdisciplinary instruction is more of a challenge than designing for a single content area, WebQuest creators should probably start with the latter until they are comfortable with the format.

## **2. A TEMPLATE FOR DESIGNING WEB QUESTS:**

### **Put Your Title Here**

Write a short paragraph here to introduce the webquest to the students. If there is a role or scenario involved (e.g., "You are a detective trying to identify the mysterious poet.") then here is where you'll set the stage. If there's no motivational intro like that, use this section to provide a short advance organizer or overview.

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### **The Task**

Describe crisply and clearly what the end result of the learners' activities will be. The task could be a:

- series of questions that must be answered,
  - summary to be created,
  - problem to be solved,
  - position to be formulated and defended,
  - creative work, or
  - anything that requires the learners to process and transform the information they've gathered.
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### **Resources**

Use this space to point out places on the internet (or physical resources in the classroom) that will be available for the learners to use to accomplish the task. Embed the anchors within a description of each resource so that your learners know in advance what they're clicking on.

[This link](#) in Washington state has an impressive home page. (This is just an example sentence with an anchor embedded within it.)

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### **The Process**

To accomplish the task, what steps should the learners go through? Use the ordered list tag (ol) which will automatically number the steps in the procedure. Be sure to put a (li) before each item in the list, and close off the list with a (/ol). (Use angle brackets rather than parentheses).

1. This is step one.
  2. This is the second step.
  3. ... and so on.
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## **Learning Advice**

Here you would provide some guidance on how to organize the information gathered. This advice could include suggestions to use flowcharts, summary tables, concept maps, or other organizing structures. The advice could also take the form of a checklist of questions to analyze the information with, or things to notice or think about.

It's possible that the learning advice would flow best if merged in with the process description. If you're providing a lot of advice, or if the data gathering and analysis process has more than a few steps, it might be best to break Learning Advice out to a separate section.

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## **Conclusion**

Put a couple of sentences here that summarize what they will have accomplished or learned by completing this webquest. You might also include some rhetorical questions that encourage them to extend their thinking into other content.

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## **EXAMPLES**

<http://projects.edtech.sandi.net/staffdev/buildingblocks/p-index.htm>

<http://edweb.sdsu.edu/webquest/necc98.htm>