

# Panasonic Student Eco Citizenship Project



## Effective Online Research

### Choose Your Words Carefully

As you begin to research a topic, you may be tempted to put the exact words of the topic into the search engine of your choice. However, simply refining your language just a bit can produce much better results.

### Consider the following examples:

#### Use unique words and phrases

When trying to find the source of the quote, “All my games were political games; I was, like Joan of Arc, perpetually being burned at the stake” searching for “Joan of Arc” may seem like a good idea because it is a name that stands out. However, this search will return many results all related to the person Joan of Arc and you will be no closer to the source of the quote. Consider instead using one or two small, but distinct piece of the quote. You could search “all my games were political games” or “Perpetually being burned at the stake.”

Try searching each of the phrases above and see what results you get. Discuss with your partner.

#### Use context terms

Most people first think of what they are searching for, but they often neglect to think about what kind of results they want. You may search for the term “Germany,” but are you looking for a map, the name of the country’s leader or something else? Adding a simply context term like “map” will provide you exactly the results you are looking for.

Circle the context terms in the following search phrases.

[Germany map]

[Maya Angelou speech]

[cute puppy album]

[allegory definition]

[Abraham Lincoln letter]

[least common multiple example]

List some other context terms you might use in a search:

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## Use operators

Operators are symbols or terms you can use to tell the search engine what to include or exclude from your search. Some common operators are:

Quotation marks – tells the search engine to search for exactly what is written in the quotation marks

- Try these two searches and compare the results:

give me the man who living

“give me the man who living”

The word OR – tells the search engine to look for any of the individual words in the search phrase

- Try these two searches and compare the results:

dog cat

dog OR cat

Minus sign – tells the search engine to exclude results associated with the term after the minus

- Try these two searches and compare the results:

zebra images

zebra images -zoo

\* NOTE: there should be no space between the minus sign and the word following

## Conclusion

All of these tips will help you in your search for environmental issues in the world, your community and your school. Keep these in mind as you work on your Eco Diary project and as you research topics in the future for other classes.