

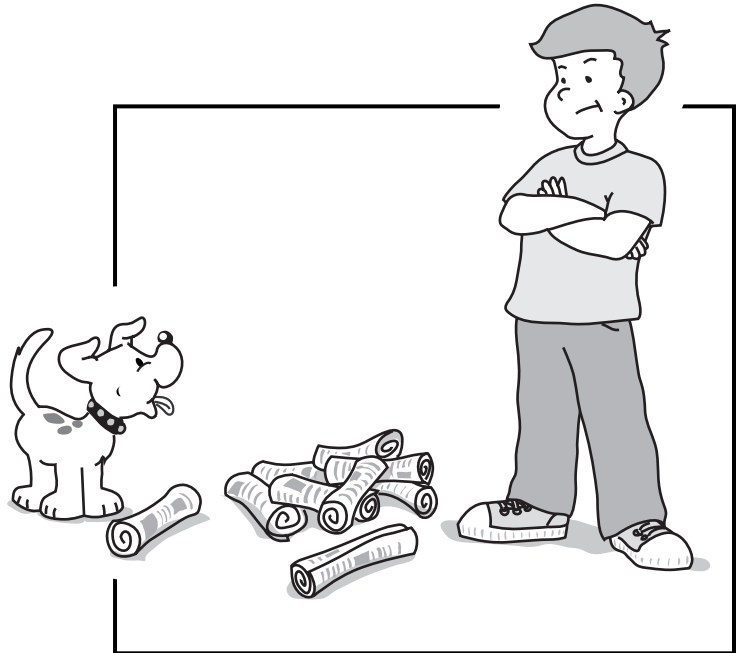
Name _____ Date _____

Smart Keyword Searching

Just think! Every major search engine has information about millions and millions of World Wide Web sites. At the click of a button, a search engine sorts through what it "knows" and lists the sites it "thinks" you want. In some ways, a search engine is like a well-trained dog. It will fetch what you want, but only if you use the right commands.

More Words Are Better

While single words are better commands for dogs, more words are better for search engines. A search for a single word may "fetch" a million sites. Obviously, it's tough to check a million sites to find the best one for your needs. Adding more words fetches fewer sites that are closer to what you need. See how it works now.



Go to www.cybersmartcurriculum.org and click on the diamond. Find the title of this lesson and click on one of the search site links.

Which search site are you using? _____

Let's say your teacher tells you to find out whether the element mercury is toxic. Start by typing in *mercury* and hitting the enter key.

How many web pages were retrieved? _____

Look over the description of the first few sites. What are they about? _____

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By now you may realize that the word *mercury* has more than one meaning. Try adding another word to tell what about *mercury* really interests you. Type in *mercury element*.

How many Web pages were retrieved? _____

Look over the description of the first few sites. What are they about? _____

Although these sites might have the answer to your question, they might not. Now try adding a third word. Type in *mercury element toxic*.

How many Web pages were retrieved? _____

Look over the description of the first few sites. What are they about? _____

Now you are getting somewhere! By now all the sites retrieved should help answer the question.

Looking at the Numbers

Compare the number of web pages retrieved for the three searches. What do they tell you about how the search engine does its work?

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Use Synonyms

Lets say you want to find out about living on the planet Mars. You think your keywords should be *planet Mars living*. Submit those three words to the search site.

How many Web pages were retrieved? _____

Look over the description of the first few sites. What are they about? _____

Now think of synonyms for each keyword. Well, a planet is a planet. Mars is Mars. But other words might work just as well as *living*, such as *colonizing*. Submit *planet Mars colonizing* to the search site.

How many Web pages were retrieved? _____

Look over the description of the first few sites. What are they about?

Which synonym retrieved that sites are most likely to answer your question? Explain why.

Be Cyber**Smart!**[®]

Always check the search help pages when using a search engine for the first time. There you'll learn which commands will work and how. You may also find menus of options for identifying just what kinds of sites you want retrieved.

