

Grade 6 English Language Arts

Week of December 7 – December 11

Lesson 1: Media Literacy

Being able to research online is a skill. There is SO MUCH information - often mixed with advertising - that it is hard to know what to focus on. What do you look at when you are doing online research?

- Do you read all of the text on the page?
- How do you use pictures to help you read?
- What do you look for on the homepage of a website?
- How do you choose what links to click?

The internet is a great place to learn about endangered animals. But when researching online, it is best to start with a plan. If you were to research an endangered animal, what would you want to find out?

Now, complete "**What Do I Do Online?**" to think about what you look at when you are online.

Next, record your three questions you may research for a report on an endangered animal.

What Do I Do Online?

There are no right or wrong responses.

1. What do you think you do online the most? (game, research, youtube, social media?)
2. Do you usually read all of the text on the page or do a quick scan?
3. How do you use pictures online to help you read?
4. How do you choose what links to click?

Three Questions

Three questions you may research when trying to find out about an endangered animal:

Before researching online, it is important to **plan, monitor, and evaluate**.

- With a plan, you know what you need to find out and are less likely to "get lost surfing".
- When researching, you can monitor: What information stands out? Should I skim or read more carefully? Does it make sense?
- It is important to **evaluate**: Does a link take you closer or further from your goal? Where else should I look? Is this the best place to find the information I need?

Questions a researcher may want answered about an endangered animal may include:

- Where is the animal found?
- What does it need to survive?
- Why is it endangered?
- How can people help to protect the animal and its habitat?

In this lesson, you will start by learning about the endangered Pacific Northwest Tree Octopus. Then you will learn some important tips for online research.

Go to the website: <https://zapatopi.net/treeoctopus/>

In following section, there is a **plan**. What do you need to find out? Take a few notes on the questions about the Pacific Northwest Tree Octopus.

Pacific Northwest Tree Octopus

Take point form notes to give ONE fact or a short response about each of the following:

Where is the animal found?

What does it need to survive?

Why is it endangered?

Look at the "Cephalonews" on the left. Is the information updated regularly? (Yes or no)

Click on SIGHTINGS. When was the last reported sighting?

Click on the HELP tab. How can people help to protect the animal and its habitat? (Just one or two of the suggestions.)

Click on ACTIVITIES. Would you consider trick-or-treating for the tree octopus? Why or why not?

What an interesting creature! Had you heard about this octopus before? How do you know the information you find online is reliable and accurate?

Anyone can get a website and put information online. There is a lot of "fake news" and "fake research". If a person were to research "**Climate Change**", for example, there are many "fake news" sources that will deny the climate change crisis and say that climate has always changed. However, the credible science-based sources that will show that while over the course of the Earth's 4.5-billion-year history, the climate has changed a lot, the rapid warming we're seeing now can't be explained by natural cycles of warming and cooling. The kind of changes that would normally happen over hundreds of thousands of years are happening in decades. So, it is VITAL that readers can tell whether or not information is accurate!

So what about the Pacific Northwest Tree Octopus? How do I know if the website I used was a **credible** source? I can find out more about who put the information online - this is a screen shot of the credits for the Pacific Northwest Tree Octopus website:

The author of this article and its subsections is **Lyle Zapato**.
This site is not associated with any school or educational organization,
other than the Kelvinic University branch of the Wild Haggis Conservation Society.
Not to be confused with the **Pacific Northwest Octopus Tree**.

If a person looks up the **Kelvinic University**, the **Wild Haggis Conservation Society**, and **Lyle Zapato**, the results look interesting. [Take a look](#).

Is the Pacific Northwest Tree Octopus real or a hoax (as in fake)? If you said fake, you are correct! It does not even exist. There is no such creature. Did you think, at first, that there was? As you can see, it is critical to be able to tell if something you find online is "real" or "fake". Hoax websites are created to help you learn about this (and some people create them for fun), but not all "fake news" and misinformation is from fake websites. There are so many false claims that are disguised as news stories to help with advertising, for politics, and even to make people believe things about people, "medical news", or places!

The old formula used by police, journalists, and researchers – Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How – can be applied in cyberspace (online) to help identify quality online information sources. You can use

this formula, too, to explore a few websites (provided here). You will decide if the information on three specific websites is real or not.

Use:

[KNOWING WHAT'S WHAT AND WHAT'S NOT – THE 5 W'S \(AND 1 "H"\) OF CYBERSPACE](#)

to help you evaluate the websites below as you record your observations on the following page.

Real or Hoax? [Buy Dehydrated Water](#)

Real or Hoax? [Vaquita - The World's Most Rare Marine Mammal](#)

Real or Hoax? [Dog Island](#)

While the examples in this lesson are kind of fun, fake news and misinformation is a serious issue. People can be lured into:

- misinformed political and other decisions/votes
- misinformed understanding of the world and science
- purchases of health food supplements that are not actually as safe as claimed or able to do what they claim to do
- unsafe actions

So, be a skeptic! Always check if information is accurate and if the source of information is credible and reliable!

Check your answers:

[Real or Hoax? Buy Dehydrated Water](#)

[Real or Hoax? Vaquita - The World's Most Rare Marine Mammal](#)

[Real or Hoax? Dog Island](#)