

Warm up

- Introduce the topic of researching on the internet.

Ask: *How often do you use the internet?* and take a show of hands. Have students brainstorm, as a group, all the reasons they use the internet during the day, and note them on the board.

Ask: *How many websites are there on the internet?* and have students guess. Tell students that there are about 1.8 billion websites on the internet.

Ask: *Are all these websites useful?* Elicit that no, most of these websites are out of date, written by non-experts or contain false information. As such, the vast majority of websites are unreliable. Explain that as a result of this, being able to find reliable websites online is a key 21st century skill.

More broadly, emphasize that now is the time to get into good research habits. Remind students of their mind maps that they created when they did the **Brainstorm Worksheet** in preparation to answer the essay question: *Is social media good or bad for young people?* Explain that in this session they'll be researching the ideas from their mind maps in preparation to write an essay.

Using the Factsheet

There are three possible ways to use the Factsheet:

- 1 Give students the **Factsheet** before the lesson, so they can read it at home and come to the lesson prepared to do the **Worksheet**. If you use this approach, start the lesson by checking that all students have read and understood the **Factsheet** and answer any questions.
- 2 Give students the **Factsheet** at the beginning of the lesson and start by working through it with the students.
- 3 Focus on the **Worksheet** in the lesson, then give students the **Factsheet** at the end of the lesson, so they can take it home and keep it as a reference or revision tool.

Theory to practice

Answers

1

The author's name should be *Sharma*.

The title is **7 ways that social media is affecting us positively**.

The article was posted on 14 **February 2018**.

The student couldn't have accessed it before it was posted, so the *Date accessed* entry is wrong.

2

- The website contains some interesting ideas that the student may wish to use in her essay. However, she should be cautious. There are spelling mistakes in the text, and the article is surrounded by adverts.
- Websites like this are best mined for ideas that the student can think about and research, rather than used as a primary source of research information.

Using the Worksheet

Practice

- 1 Work with a partner and answer the following questions.

- Put the students in pairs and have them read Exercise 1. Give them five to ten minutes to discuss the questions, and then have them call out their ideas. Most students will have some experience of conducting online research, so encourage them to talk about their own research processes.

Possible answers

- a It's very important to take good notes as you research a topic so that the information gathered can be quickly re-accessed at a later date. It is very frustrating to read about interesting ideas but then to be unable to find the source of those ideas when writing an assignment. Also, by taking reliable notes on the sources of your ideas you are making life much easier for yourself when the time comes to write your bibliography.

- b** Students should include a link to the relevant article, its title, the author name(s), the date the article was written and the date they accessed the article. It's also very useful to have a short summary of the article that you can read through quickly, to remind yourself of its content.
- c** The number of sources needed for a written assignment varies depending on the length and type of the assignment. But in general, most ideas or arguments should be backed up by two or three sources.
- d** The best websites to use are those associated with reputable print publications or newspapers. Websites with the following letters at the end can – broadly speaking – be trusted: *.com* (the standard ending to a web address, generally used by commercial organizations), *.org* (generally used by not-for-profit organizations), *.co.uk* (UK companies) *.gov* (governmental organizations) and *.ac.uk* or *.sch.uk* (academic institutions).

Unofficial websites should be avoided. These include websites that host a lot of advertisements, clickbait or pop-ups. Also, ugly graphics, animated gifs, poor page layout, spelling errors and broken links are all signs that a webpage cannot be trusted. Blogs and wikis are also likely to be full of personal opinions, and therefore of limited use.

Briefly mention that *Google Scholar*, *Google Books*, *Microsoft Academic*, *WorldWideScience*, *Science.gov*, *Refseek*, *Educational Resources Information Center*, *Virtual Learning Resources Center*, *iSeek*, *ResearchGate*, *BASE*, *Infotopia*, *PubMed Central* and *LexisWeb* are all highly valuable resources for more specific, academic research, and will be useful later in their academic careers.

2 **Go online and open Google in your browser. Work out the answers to the following questions.**

- Tell the students to go online and find answers to Exercise 2. They should treat the exercise as an exploration. Encourage students to experiment with search engine terms and see what results they find. Remind students that if their searching gives them more ideas for their essays, it's not too late to add to their mind maps. Allow plenty of time for exploration (15 to 20 minutes), then feed back answers as a group.

Possible answers

- a/b** Searching for whole questions, without selecting specific keywords, is a very hit-and-miss approach. You may find some useful results, and an overview of a topic, and you may even get some more ideas to add to your mind map, but you will also get a lot of hits that are of no use to you.
- c** By using quotation marks, you can search or filter for a specific word or sentence. That is, you can search for an 'exact match'. Generally, by using quotation marks in your searches, you will find fewer articles, but they will be more useful to you. This is especially true if you use multiple keywords. For example, if you want to focus on the link between depression and social media use in young people, you can use the search terms "*social media*", "*young people*" and "*depression*" for more focused results.
- d** Including the term *AND* in a search between keywords will ensure that only pages containing *all* those keywords will be found. Using *OR* will find articles containing alternative search terms. This is useful when there are several ways of expressing an idea, and you don't know which to use as a search term. For example, performing the search "*social media*" *AND* "*sadness*" *OR* "*depression*" *OR* "*mental health*" will find all the relevant results on this topic. The search term *NOT* excludes words that are not relevant to your topic. So if you were searching for information on the wild animal the jaguar, you could filter out any articles about the car manufacturer by using *NOT* "*car*" at the end of your search.
- e** There are many useful search engine tricks. You can search on a particular website using the term *site*. You can filter results according to the most recent hits, so that your research is as up to date as possible. You can use *versus* to compare things. You can use *define* to get a quick definition of a word or phrase.

3 **Visit the website <https://www.internetmatters.org/advice/social-media-guides-parents/>. Would it be a useful resource for your essay? Evaluate the website by answering the following questions.**

- Tell the students to visit the website <https://www.internetmatters.org/advice/social-media-guides-parents/>. Explain that they are going to evaluate the website for its usefulness as a source. Tell them to work through the questions.

Possible answers

- According to its 'About us' page, Internet Matters is a not-for-profit organization that claims to 'empower parents and carers to keep children safe in the digital world'. The team consists of a number of experts in related fields, as listed here: <https://www.internetmatters.org/about-us/team/>. There is also an advisory panel, consisting of senior executives from children's charities.
- The website addresses many issues, including cyberbullying and screen time, but doesn't offer any measurable data on the extent of the problems. The website is relatively neutral as it comes from a not-for-profit organization, although it should be noted that the site is sponsored by a number of telecommunications companies.
- The website is a useful reference for answering the question because it can be used to see what advice is available to parents worried about the impact of social media on young people. However, it is limited because it doesn't contain many facts or figures.
- Point out that the list of questions on the **Worksheet** can be used to evaluate any website – a key 21st century skill.

4 Go back to the mind map you created for the Brainstorm Worksheet. Select one area of the mind map, and decide what keywords would make the best search terms. Choose three or four search terms.

- Tell the students to refer back to their mind maps (they may already be adding to them). Have them select one area and decide on keywords for their searches. Remind them of the commands they learned about in Exercise 2. Do not spend too long on this – within five minutes the students should have plenty of search terms to use for their research.

5 Create a Word document with 15–20 research grids. For each of your search terms, find three or four useful webpages or articles.

- Tell the students to create a research grid. Circulate around the room as students begin their online research. Oversee the process of the students filling in their grids, and be on hand to help with any tricky language.
- Tell the students that they should continue to fill out their research grids until they have three or four online resources relating to each of the ideas on their mind maps. (This will have to be done in the students' individual study time.)

Reflect

6 Think about researching online. Answer the following questions, and make notes.

- Encourage students to reflect on their own research processes by answering the questions in Exercise 6.
- After a suitable length of time, encourage them to share their thoughts with their partners.
- Have a whole-class discussion about the processes of online research, based on their answers to Exercise 6.