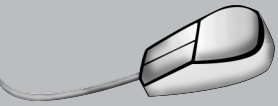


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(AS) = Activity Sheet



Introduction

As primary schools connect to the Internet, a new vast and exciting resource becomes available to teachers and children. The purpose of this book is to provide:

- an easy introduction to those who are new to the Internet
- suitable websites to support children's learning and from which they can obtain information quickly
- enjoyable and challenging activities which support children's study of English using the Internet.

The book does not suggest that traditional sources of information – books, libraries, videos – should be replaced, but rather that different sources and types of information have now become accessible.

In general, the USA has taken the lead in the use of the Internet and this is particularly marked in sites for children. The potential of the Internet for learning has been seized on in an imaginative way in the States on both educational sites and public utility and government sites, where there is a recognition that a young audience deserves specific content and a specific approach. Sadly, this is not yet widely recognised in Australia.

As a consequence of this, many sites chosen for this book are US sites. In terms of English, this represents a major issue for spelling, vocabulary and expressions. Most children are already widely exposed to US, Australian and UK regional English through television. Awareness of the great variety of English – and recognition that different cultures have different ways of expressing themselves – is an essential part of growing up and being educated in the Twenty-first Century. Regard it as a learning opportunity, rather than a problem.

Using this book

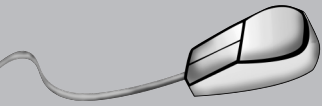
At the time of publication **all** the sites listed are free and we have not referred to any sites which require subscriptions. However, we do refer to shareware sites, from which you can download software free for a limited time, but are then charged.

The Internet is changing constantly and so are the sites that appear on it. We cannot guarantee that all the sites and links mentioned in this book will remain as described (some might disappear altogether). Therefore, any comments about specific sites, such as the level of text difficulty, speed of loading, etc., are based on the status of the site when the book was written and subsequent upgrades might alter such facts.

NB: The screen shots in this book have been taken directly from the Internet. The quality of some of these images may look poor. This is because they are intended to be looked at on-screen, rather than reproduced on a printed page.

Working off-line

When using sites it might well be more useful to download the site for the children to use: to save time on the Internet and to provide a permanent resource. In this way, all the children can be working on a site at the same time. There are many commercially available programs for you to try, such as *WebWhacker* (available from <http://www.ffg.com>), which can capture whole sites. Often these programs work in the background while you continue searching elsewhere on the Internet.



Introduction

Other programs, such as *Secret Agent*, will allow you to work off-line by loading files from your 'cache' (the store on your hard disk where your visited pages are kept when on-line). However, these files are not permanent and would be lost if you did not save them. You may wish to save certain pages manually, using the 'file and save' option in your browser, although this will take longer. This, however, saves only text, unless you are using the latest version of your browser, so you will need to save images using the right button on your mouse to click on the images.



What if pages do not look the same off-line?

The usual problem is that images are not displayed. If an image does not load off-line, often it will be simply a matter of checking the HTML* link to it in your browser.

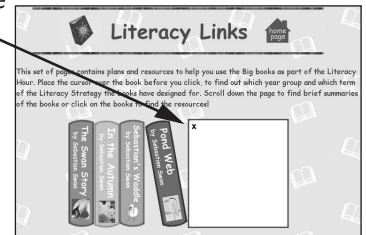
Display the source HTML code to look for the image reference.

e.g. `
`

and change the link to where you have saved the images e.g. `
`

Save this file and the next time you open the page in your browser, the image will appear.

missing image



Using web addresses

*Above, we have mentioned 'HTML'. This is the HyperText Markup Language which is the standard language that everyone on the Internet has used to create pages (although other new languages are now being added). To access a page, an address is typed into the box at the top of your browser.



an NMIT site address

The address is referred to as a site's URL (Uniform Resource Locator) and usually begins with `http://` which tells your browser that it is making a web connection. **online.nmit.vic.edu.au** is the name of the web server, the computer where the pages are stored (in the case of the NMIT example). `/link/` shows the directory where we want to look.

You can store addresses of useful sites using the bookmarking or 'favourites' option in your browser.

First steps

Here are some suggestions for excellent sites that you may want to visit first, containing information and many links to browse for yourself.

- The Education Australia site is increasing and is a source of information and materials for teachers at <http://online.nmit.vic.edu.au/link/>.
- <http://www.AATE.org.au> provides links to resources and articles concerning the Australian Association for the Teaching of English.
- A good links site for teacher resources, discussion worksheets, lesson plans, forums and articles can be found at <http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/resource/resengl.html>.
- The Children's Literature Web Guide at <http://www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/>.
- The ABC site is an excellently designed, massive resource and is organised in many sections at <http://www.abc.gov.au/>.