

## WebQuests

### Introduction

Hanh thi Nguyen

A WebQuest is “an inquiry-oriented lesson format in which most or all the information that learners work with comes from the web” (WebQuest.Org, 2007). The structure of most WebQuests, adapted from the model put forth by WebQuest.Org, includes:

An *introduction* in which the teacher introduces the context and reasons for the WebQuest as well as the roles that the students will assume in the WebQuest. The teacher may also introduce key concepts and vocabulary to scaffold the students at this stage.

A description of the main *task* that students will perform during the WebQuest, in other words, what is to be accomplished. For language learning, it is also a good idea to communicate to the students what skills will be practiced during these tasks.

A description of the *process* to accomplish the task above. The teacher lays out clearly the steps that students will take to complete the WebQuest.

A list of *resources* for students to use in their search for information. This includes a list of websites that the teacher has selected.

A *conclusion* activity that wraps up the WebQuest. This may be a real-world activity to be completed outside of the class as a culmination of the task.

An *evaluation* framework in which the teacher communicates clearly to the students how their work is going to be evaluated. It is a good idea to evaluate both the content of the students’ work and the language used.

WebQuests have been used widely and effectively in education since the mid-1990s. WebQuests are excellent for language learning because they open up opportunities for the learners to engage with authentic materials as they perform authentic tasks that are relevant to their lives. WebQuests are practically borderless since they tap into the vast amount of information available on the world wide web. However, it is also due to this aspect that it is very important for teachers to plan carefully, check the websites to be used in advance for content appropriateness as well as linguistic appropriateness and make sure that students develop critical thinking when they access online information.

The following collection of WebQuests was created by the students of AL6740: Issues in Computer Assisted Language Learning. These WebQuests’ strength lies in the appropriateness and authenticity of the topics and tasks to the target groups of students. Readers are welcome to adapt them for their teaching contexts and needs.

### Reference

WebQuest.Org (2007). What is a Web-Quest? Retrieved on October 8, 2007 from <http://webquest.org/index.php>

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## **School Search**

*Daniela Wagner*

### **Teaching Situation**

There are 30 German students at higher intermediate level in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade, which is at the end of junior high school in the German school system. They are preparing to either go abroad for one year or to attend exchange programs. This activity taps into this motivation.

### **1. Introduction**

Students brainstorm in groups of 3 to answer the following questions. They should also create more questions:

1. Why are we going abroad?
2. Where can we go?
3. For how long can we go?
4. What kind of schools can we attend?
5. Can we just go for the summer?
6. What activities or jobs are available there?
7. How much does it cost?

After sharing their initial ideas, the students will be re-grouped according to their interests and work together in pairs to make the research more convenient and efficient (since 2 students can share a computer). The pairs write down further questions and concerns that they have about going abroad. They also consider concerns that their parents might have.

Students should take short notes on their collected ideas.

### **2. Task**

Students will search for information about academic programs suitable for their needs and goals on websites. After evaluating these academic programs and selecting the top three most suitable ones, they will prepare the applications to these programs and present their decisions to the class.

### **3. Process**

- a. First, students search for information online and compare different academic programs. They create and fill out a self-created chart in order to compare different programs. They also read about the experiences of students who have studied abroad before.
- b. Then, students select and prepare applications to three programs. They should download application forms from those programs and list the costs and deadlines for the applications. They should check to see whether they can apply online or whether they have to do paper-work.
- c. Next, students give reasons for their selections and provide arguments to support their decisions. In addition, they need to name three areas/states where they do not want to go to and explain why.
- d. Finally, the students prepare a class presentation about their selected programs.

### **4. List of resources**

General search engines:

[www.google.com](http://www.google.com)

[www.altavista.com](http://www.altavista.com)

Websites related to study abroad:

[www.studyabroad.com/](http://www.studyabroad.com/)

[www.goabroad.com/](http://www.goabroad.com/)

[www.aifsabroad.com/](http://www.aifsabroad.com/)

[www.studyabroadlinks.com/](http://www.studyabroadlinks.com/)

[www.studiesabroad.com/](http://www.studiesabroad.com/)

Websites related to studying, traveling, and working in the US:

[www.ef.com/](http://www.ef.com/)

[www.ccusa.com/](http://www.ccusa.com/)

[www.interexchange.org/campus](http://www.interexchange.org/campus)

[www.statravel.com.sg](http://www.statravel.com.sg)

## **5. Conclusion**

By the end of the activity, students will have picked three institutions that seem to fit their personal needs best. Students will write an application and send it to at least one out of the three to see what their chances are.

## **6. Evaluation**

Students will be graded on the following:

- Pair work participation
- Research result
- Organization and content of the presentation
- Handout's quality
- Clarity of opinion
- Grammar, organization, pronunciation
- Supporting materials (poster, power point, board, maps, and so forth )

## **Notes for Teachers**

The teacher will provide support anytime and assist if questions arise during the search. Later, the teacher and peers will give feedback on the students' presentation.

## **O'ahu's Traffic Solution**

*Alison Fukuchi*

### **Teaching Situation**

This WebQuest is designed for use with an advanced level adult integrated skills class in a private language school in Waikiki, Hawai'i. There are 12 students in the class and all are permanent residents of this country. A majority of the class has been living and working in Hawai'i for at least 3 years. The class meets 2 nights a week for 2 hours. They often complain about the traffic problems they encounter when commuting to and from school, work and home.

### **1. Introduction**

How long do you usually sit in traffic during rush hour? I have sat on the H-1 freeway for more than two hours trying to get from Waikiki to the Pali Highway! Traffic is a major problem on the island of O'ahu. For the past few years, lawmakers and the public have been trying to find solutions to ease the congestion we deal with everyday. Many people support developing a train system for the island. Others oppose the rail system and believe that we need to build more roads instead. Still others believe that O'ahu needs buses that run more frequently. It is clear that the island of O'ahu is in need of traffic relief!

### **2. Task**

The students will survey the three current options to solve traffic problems on O'ahu and write a letter to the mayor with their opinions about some solutions for these problems.

### **3. Process**

Students will work together in 3 groups of 4 students. Each group will be responsible for one viewpoint (rail system, more buses, more roads). Students must gather data from the Internet to research the history of each viewpoint, current issues and solutions offered by each viewpoint. They will be responsible for creating a Power Point presentation to inform the class about each option. The class as a whole will then have a debate and vote for the solution they like best. After exploring the advantages and disadvantages of each solution, groups will compose a letter to Mayor Mufi Hanneman explaining their viewpoints. (The mayor's office does respond to such letters. In fact, for the writing task, the teacher may want to use the "letter to the mayor" forms at the State Library information desk.)

Each group will assign the following roles to its members:

Discussion Director: organizes group meetings  
Environmentalism: researches environmental impact  
Financial Advisor: investigates budget concerns  
Connector: examines solutions in other cities

Each individual is responsible for bringing meaningful information to discuss when groups meet during class time.

### **4. List of Resources**

[www.honoluluadvertiser.com](http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com)  
[www.state.hi.us/dot/](http://www.state.hi.us/dot/)  
[www.honolulu.gov](http://www.honolulu.gov)

www.Hawaiiireporter.com  
www.grassrootinstitute.org  
www.Oahumpo.org  
MS Power Point  
Hawai'i State Public Libraries

## **5. Conclusion**

Students will vote for the best solution to the traffic problems or offer alternatives. Each group will send their letter to Mufi Hanneman (or current mayor).

This could be an ongoing project as new issues come to light and alternative solutions are suggested. Students could be asked to analyze traffic problems in their neighborhoods and look at current projects. If this project brings up new concerns or other solutions to the traffic problems, those can be investigated as well.

## **6. Evaluation**

Each group will be evaluated on their final product, a Power Point presentation, based on comprehensiveness, presentation of information, creativity and justification of opinions. Letters to the mayor will not be graded, but count toward an overall group grade.

Each group member will be evaluated by group mates using a peer evaluation form and by the teacher based on observation. The criteria will be based on contributions to the group, fulfilling individual roles, attending group meetings, and meeting group deadlines.

## **Freedom Trail**

*Yoshie Nishikiori*

### **Teaching Situation**

This activity is designed for low to high intermediate level English majors at a college in Japan. They are all going to study abroad in Boston, Massachusetts in a few months. This activity is to prepare for this experience. There are 15 students in the class.

### **1. Introduction**

The Freedom Trail in Boston is a 2.5 mile red-brick walking trail that leads you to 16 nationally significant historic sites. Visitors can see landmarks of the Revolution by walking the trail. Students will work in groups of three and create a brochure about these historical sites on the Freedom Trail. Each group will pick one site, do some research online, write a few paragraphs about it, and contribute to the class brochure. When they go to Boston, they will be able to visit those sites with their own brochure.

### **2. Task**

In this WebQuest, students will find out about one historic site on the Freedom Trail and compose a section of the class brochure about this site.

Students will use their skimming, scanning, and comprehension skills to do research and read articles to get information they want. They will also go through the process of writing and revising, which will help them learn how to write efficiently. They are also given many opportunities to interact with each other through group discussion and presentation, for example. Finally, they should learn how to work with others effectively; group cohesiveness will be needed to complete the tasks.

### **3. Process**

- a. First, students work in groups of three and try to answer the following questions:
  - Which sites are you interested in the most? Why?
  - What do you want to know about the site?
  - How can you learn about the site?Students should write down the ideas they came up with so that they can refer to them later.
- b. Second, each group decides on one site they want to work on and does research on the site on the Internet. Students need at least three sources, and they have to cite them in their writings. Students also need to find some pictures to put in the brochure. The teacher should give them constant feedback by setting personal conferences or by emailing.
- c. Third, ask volunteers to edit the brochure. These editors have to meet the teacher constantly, check student writings, decide the format of the brochure, and pick pictures to be used. Students get feedback from their peers, after which they can revise if they want. In the end of the activity, each group gives an oral presentation using Power Point, if possible.

### **4. List of resources**

The Freedom Trail Foundation ([www.thefreedomtrail.org/](http://www.thefreedomtrail.org/))

City of Boston ([www.cityofboston.gov/freedomtrail/](http://www.cityofboston.gov/freedomtrail/))

A View on Cities (<http://www.aviewoncities.com/boston/freedomtrail.htm>)

Boston.com ([www.boston.com/travel/boston/freedomtrail/podcast/](http://www.boston.com/travel/boston/freedomtrail/podcast/))

## **5. Conclusion**

The class puts together a brochure about the Freedom Trail. This brochure may be distributed to other classes or next year's students interested in visiting Boston. By the end of this activity, students will be able to (1) improve reading comprehension skills, (2) learn how to write efficiently in a limited space, (3) learn how to get information from many resources and cite them, (4) use their critical thinking skills to critique the readings, (5) gain speaking skills through a lot of interaction and presentation, (6) learn about the historical background of Boston, and (7) actually use their brochure and knowledge when they visit there later.

## **6. Evaluation**

Groups will be evaluated on the content of their work and their effort. Criteria might include, for example, the usefulness, comprehensibility, and layout of their information or the time and effort put into their work. In addition, students will be evaluated as individuals using both peer and self evaluation.