



Teacher Guide



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netTrekker Teacher Guide

Integrating the Internet into your lesson plans is like building a house. The Internet provides the bricks, and you, the teacher, provide the mortar. You play a vital part in integrating the Internet into instruction—information does not equal knowledge!

You need tools to build the house: tools to help you acquire and assemble the bricks. You need netTrekkerSM, an academic search engine specifically geared to the needs of elementary school, middle school and high school students. With your help, *netTrekker* can:

- add excitement to learning by making the Internet more accessible;
- teach kids research skills—how to explore topics using the computer;
- take advantage of multimedia as a communication tool;
- facilitate student collaboration; and
- help students understand context in learning as well as the structure of information.

Have you ever wondered why, when you ask your class to use the Internet as a tool for research, many students submit a bunch of links to loosely related websites—or worse, papers that are copied and pasted directly from a website. Well, you wouldn't hire a general contractor without a blueprint or laborers without tools. So, avoid the same pitfalls when integrating the Internet into your lesson plans. It's easy; just follow five simple steps: schedule, plan, gather, assemble, and invite.

Schedule Time. If you are new to computers and the Internet, remember that learning technology takes time. It will save time, but only after you are comfortable with the basics and how to incorporate the Internet into your style of teaching. You and your students will be thrilled with the ease of use of *netTrekker*—your searches will take less time and return much better results. Adding new activities is more exciting, though not as “cut and dried” as a textbook, so leave a little extra time for trial and error—and the inevitable school computer crash.

Plan Lesson. We all remember the directive from teacher's college: Proper Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance. It is especially important now. Fit the technology to your learning objectives (not the other way around). There are many sites devoted to sample lesson plans (check our user guide for links), and they are good places to look for ideas, but it is better to determine your needs first. If you enjoy entertaining company, you would plan for a large dining room when designing your house. Likewise, if you want to incorporate more cooperative learning activities, you could capitalize on the thought-provoking ideas and perspectives on the Web.

Gather Materials. Search the Internet before your students do. With *netTrekker* you don't have to worry that your students will stumble upon inappropriate sites or pages of irrelevant links—every *netTrekker* website is reviewed by an educator! Your inexperienced students will find the subject groupings intuitive, and your experienced students will love the advanced capabilities: searching by grade level, content type, language and point of view. As you search (our examples below illustrate four great strategies: keyword, drill-down, keyword then drill-down, keyword then refine), look for cues to show students how the information will be used in the lesson plan—or, even better, plan exciting activities so the students learn the information without even knowing it.

Assemble Plan. Provide the mortar to make the information meaningful. Create innovative assignments—research reports are only one type of project! Consider graphs, charts, scenarios, class opinion polls, spreadsheet calculations, photo journals, storyboards, concept maps, slide shows, persuasive presentations, portfolios, debates—whatever works for you. The point is to create an exciting opportunity for students to bind the bricks of information into knowledge that is meaningful to them.

Invite Neighbors! The Internet is a wonderful resource for information and the most powerful medium ever developed for communication. Provide opportunities for students to wander around the house—to learn from each other's work, to share their learning with parents, and to exhibit their projects to community members.

OK, so what are the keys for effective Internet-enhanced lessons? There are at least five, and *netTrekker* excels at each:

1. **Context Cultivates Connection:** provide context to “connect the lesson” for the topic or to the larger subject;
2. **Interdisciplinary Inspires Inquiry:** allow for interdisciplinary activities, with the lesson anchored in core curriculum;
3. **Perspective Provides Progress:** offer opportunities for students to examine primary source documents and to make decisions and role-play;
4. **Multimedia Matches Multiple Learning Styles:** integrate multiple forms of media into your lessons and assignments—not simply text;
5. **Connect the Present with the Past:** use current events as the window through which students connect to the past or to the point of view of another culture; and,

1. Context Cultivates Connection

How often have you heard, “Why do we have to learn this—what does it relate to?” The Internet can help your students improve their ability to make connections within and between subjects. A good strategy to use at the beginning of a unit is to probe the connections between newly introduced themes and any prior knowledge (or at the end of a unit to review and preview).

One way to do this is to use *netTrekker* to find an assortment of intriguing websites organized around a main theme (for younger students; for older students, let them do the research). Then, ask the students to establish the relationship between the sites and the theme. These relationships can be expressed in prose, with a pictorial concept map (Venn diagram), or in small group discussion. For younger students, you can assess their comprehension with a simple yes/no rubric. For advanced students, the assessment is more varied: how many sites mapped, to what degree are they related, and how accurately are the relationships expressed.

How does netTrekker help?

netTrekker makes this strategy easy because it organizes information on the Web by school subject. You can use the Subject Search links to narrow your search by clicking the links that best describe what you are looking for. In addition, *netTrekker's* “Searching in Context” function allows you to search by keyword or famous name within a selected topic. Once you click one or more subject links to narrow your topic, you can enter a keyword in the Keyword search box, or enter a name in the Famous Person search box.

What are some examples?

Social Studies

Ask your students to explore the connections between “assembly line and surging productivity,” “the automobile and corporate consolidation,” and the term “roaring twenties”. This research activity is the launch point for several destinations:

- bridge from earlier knowledge: recall how things were done, in order to see how dramatically different they were in the Twenties
- bridge to today: explore relationship between productivity (information technology), corporate consolidation (AOL and Time-Warner), Bill Gates, and the longest economic expansion in U.S. history.

Suggested activities include: small group discussion, concept mapping, and debates.

Finding these related topics is easy with *netTrekker*, because of the intuitive grouping of topics:

Drill Down (click the following links in order): Social Studies > U.S. History > The Twenties and the Great Depression (1920 to 1940) > The Roaring Twenties (1919 to 1929) > Expanding Economy

Notice how the topics are closely related—phrases like “Growth Industries”, “Economic Boom”, “Corporate Consolidation”, “Pro-Business Policy”, and “Irrational Exuberance” are grouped because they have added significance in context. Click on any of those topics to find sites that will help your students understand the dramatic changes that affected life in the Roaring Twenties.

Drill Down: Social Studies > U.S. History > Contemporary America (1974 to Present) > Into the 21st Century > Clinton Administration, 1992 – 2000 > Economics / Trade > Economic Expansion

Science

Ask your students to explore the relationship between Earthquakes and Volcanoes. Using the sites listed ask your students to deduce a common denominator for the two phenomena. Through this exercise, students begin to establish concepts of interdependency, and multiple effects from a single cause, in this case, *plate tectonics*. Use a culminating site with multimedia animations to solidify the relationship between concepts. Finding qualified websites is easy with *netTrekker*.

Drill Down: Science > Earth Science > Earth's Processes > Earthquakes > Causes > Select a site using the Overall Rating and brief synopsis as guides. For example:
USCB: Understanding Earthquake
(<http://www.crystal.ucsb.edu/ics/understanding/>)

Drill Down: Science > Earth Science > Earth's Processes > Volcanoes > *Keyword Search Terms:* “volcano causes”
Select a site using the Overall Rating and brief synopsis as guides. For example:
Learner/ Volcanoes in Action
(<http://www.learner.org/exhibits/volcanoes/entry.html>)

For the culminating site...

Drill Down, then Refine: Science > Earth Science > Earth's Processes > *Keyword Search Terms:* “volcano and earthquake and cause”
Select a site using the Overall Rating and brief synopsis as guides. For example:
PBS/Savage Earth: The Earth at Work
(<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/savageearth/hellscrust/>)

Language Arts

For the students who want to know why they should learn something, have your class explore the relationship between a great speech and tips for public speaking. For example, ask students to listen to Kennedy’s 1961 inaugural address. Divide your class into groups to give students a chance to discover reasons why the speech is so compelling. Then, have the groups explore a website devoted to public speaking. Finding the resources, refined to include famous persons, is easy with *netTrekker*.

Drill Down: Language Arts > Speaking and Listening > *Famous Person Keyword Search Term:* “Kennedy”, click John F. Kennedy. Click on the Audio tab at the top of the Search Results, or **Refine Search** by placing a checkmark next to Audio in the Content Type (Multimedia) option. This indicates that you are only interested in websites that contain audio clips. For example:

Audio and Video Clips: The Voice of America

(<http://library.thinkquest.org/12587/av.html>)

click [John F. Kennedy's 1961 Inaugural Address](#) for an audio recording of the famous speech.

Drill Down: Language Arts>Speaking and Listening>Formal Presentations>Speeches to Persuade>General Guidelines

Select a site using the Overall Rating and brief synopsis as guides. For example:

Common errors in student's persuasive speeches

(<http://www.vsc.ccc.tn.us/academic/humanities/com100/persuasivespeecherrors.htm>)

Single page site that details the errors students tend to make when writing speeches.

2. Interdisciplinary Inspires Inquiry

Has the refrain, "This is boring—what does it have to do with me?" echoed in your classroom? One good strategy to encourage your student's curiosity is to identify a subject with a variety of related topics and ask your class to create a list of links to related topics that are relevant. This is an effective way to engage students because you are asking them to react to the Web-based activities from a personal perspective—it allows them to feel connected to the theme and to feel that the subject matter matters.

Of course, a list of links doesn't help students learn unless they explain the connection between subjects. By supporting their choice, students act as scholars, pursuing knowledge of interest. Short, stand-up presentations are a great way to cement this activity. Public speaking becomes easier when we speak on a subject of interest.

How does netTrekker help?

netTrekker extends the ease of context searching into interdisciplinary searching with the "Related Topics" feature. Once your students get to the Search Results page they can try clicking one of the **Related Topics** links at the bottom of the page. "Related Topics" show alternative "taxonomy strings," like a bread crumb trail of additional subject links related to your current search.

What are some examples?**Social Studies**

One of our favorite answers to the question, "Why did the Nazi's commit such horrible acts?" is, "because of propaganda." The answer obviously lacks substance, but it provides a great start to an interdisciplinary look at a complex problem. Start with a great historical website to show examples of WW II-era propaganda. Then take a look from the Language Arts side as to what makes propaganda different from advertising (excellent topic for class discussion). Then, look at the subject from the Psychological angle, examining human tendencies. If time or interest permits, examine propaganda as art. *netTrekker* helps you find these distinct, yet inter-related resources:

Keyword Search: WWII and propaganda

Refine Search by clicking on the Pictures tab in your search results, or on the Primary Source tab.

Select a site using the Overall Rating and brief synopsis as guides. For example:

NARA: Power of Persuasion (Poster Art from WWII)

(http://www.archives.gov/exhibit_hall/powers_of_persuasion/powers_of_persuasion_home.html)

Find information from other disciplines by drilling down to these examples:

Language Arts > Journalism > Media Literacy > Recognizing Persuasive Techniques > Propaganda

Propaganda Analysis Home Page

(<http://www.propagandacritic.com/>)

For journalists to really understand the reliability or credibility of their sources, it is necessary to know what propaganda is, and how and when it is used.

Social Studies > Psychology > Social Psychology > Social Cognition > Persuasion
Influence

(<http://sun.science.wayne.edu/~wpoff/cor/grp/influenc.html>)

A brief overview of 'influence from the perspective of Social Psychology. Includes a discussion of sources of influence, conformity, compliance and obedience.

Arts > Visual Art > Famous Works of Art > Widely Recognized American Art > Art of the Social Realist Paintings

Social Realist Museum

(<http://www.stanford.edu/~gfreidin/courses/147/propart/propart.htm>)

This site is the home page for American and foreign social realist and propaganda works of art.

Science

Seminal scientific achievements transcend the disciplines. Explore with your class the science of the atomic bomb with an interdisciplinary lens. The bomb's repercussions were more than physical: it changed the face of war, politics, and our culture's psychology. Begin by researching an educator-approved website, then lead your class in a discussion through one of the following lenses:

Keyword Search Terms: "atomic bomb trinity"

Refine Search by clicking on the Quote, Picture, or Lesson Plan Tabs.

Select a site using Overall Rating and brief synopsis as guides. For example:

Seattle Times/Fifty Years from Trinity

(<http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/trinity/index.html>)

For follow-up topics, consider finding supporting sites in these categories:

- Political Science: MAD, or the strategy of Mutually Assured Destruction, became one of the cornerstones of American foreign policy. Discuss the pro's and con's of that strategy.
Social Studies > World History > Globalization (1945 to Present) > Cold War > Development of the Cold War > Nuclear Arms Race > Mutual Deterrence > Mutually Assured Destruction.
- Language Arts: For those who grew up after World War II, the prospect of nuclear annihilation was part of their cultural backdrop. Examine a literary work from that time period.
Keyword Search: Lord of the Flies

- Psychology: US policies may have contributed to the conforming discipline of the 1950s, the rebellion of the '60s and the malaise of the '70s. Research the websites detailing the counterculture of the 1960's.

Drill Down: Social Studies > U.S. History > The Upheaval of a Nation (1960 to 1975) > The Vietnam War and American Society (1960 to 1974) > American Society in the 60's > Values / Culture > Counterculture

Scroll to Sites: Counterculture and click on a site listed. To see more information on each of the sites listed, click on the More button.

- Language Arts

Understanding the time and place an author lived is important for several reasons. We see how a writer is bound by context, and how his writing transcends that context to connect to the universal human experience. A great example is Ernest Hemingway—by studying him in an interdisciplinary way, the learning experience is more interesting for your students.

Look at *A Farewell to Arms*, for example. World War I was a defining experience for writers of Hemingway's generation, especially those who served in the military. Although he is often associated with the glorification of violence, *A Farewell to Arms* suggests instead a critical view of war. Give your students a chance to find out why by researching a Hemingway website which includes information about his life, his work, and his writing.

Drill Down: Language Arts > Literature > American Literature > American Lit 1914 - 1945 > Authors and Their Works > Ernest Hemingway

Scroll to **Sites: Ernest Hemingway** and click on the **More** button to expand the information on each listed site.

Select a site using the Overall Rating and brief synopsis as guides. For example:

[Hemingway: His Life and Marriages](http://www.ernest.hemingway.com/)

(<http://www.ernest.hemingway.com/>)

This is one of the best sites for Hemingway background. Follow the links to his career, marriages, fascination with food, and his hometown of Oak Park.

Look for more connections by Related Topics. To do so,

Go Back Up Taxonomy String: Language Arts > Literature > American > 1914 - 1945 > Authors and Their Works > [Ernest Hemingway](#)

Scroll to **Related Topics** at the bottom of the page and click on the taxonomy string listed there:

Social Studies > U.S. History > The Twenties and the Great Depression (1920 to 1940) > Life in the Roaring Twenties > Culture > High Culture > Literature > Prose > [Ernest Hemingway](#)

[Ernest Hemingway](#)

Follow link: [Farewell to Arms](#).

Timeline: Do a **Famous Person Search** on Ernest Hemingway. Click on the **Timeline** icon (****show icon) for a timeline of eras, events, arts, innovations/discoveries, and other famous people, constrained by the years of Hemingway's lifespan.

3. Perspective Provides Progress

Has your subject matter become a little dry? Liven it up with different points of view. The Web offers a breadth of perspectives and viewpoints! Students benefit from a wide variety of Web resources because they can explore and make sense of the issues by learning different points of view. Offer your students more challenging, engaging approaches to a topic by allowing them to assume the roles of experts with different points of view, or teammates with different roles to play on a specific project. Choose either a complex task with multiple roles, or a topic that is in dispute or at least offers a couple different perspectives. Current events, controversial social and environmental topics work well.

For example, consider an activity that begins by establishing background knowledge, then divide the students into groups. In the groups, assign each student or pair of students a particular role, task, or perspective to master. The goal is to become “experts” on one aspect of a topic. When the roles come together, students must synthesize their learning by completing a culminating activity such as e-mailing congressional representatives or presenting their interpretation to a “real world” expert on the topic.

How does netTrekker help?

netTrekker excels at offering your students different perspectives. Take advantage of *netTrekker*'s built-in capability to identify sites containing primary sources and quotations.

What are some examples?

Social Studies

A big problem with teaching history is that it is just that, history. It's finished. Bring it to life for your class with first person accounts and primary source documents. (Students often think that historians are notorious for making things boring.) Begin with a collection of original writings to set the tone for a unit. Read a passage, written by a famous person, and ask your class to take stand: for or against the idea. Don't tell the students who wrote the ideas—until after you have discussed. For example:

Famous Person Search: Lenin.

Refine your search: When you get a Search Results page, click on the Primary Sources tab. All the sites you get in a new Search Results page will be ones that contain primary sources.

Select a site using the Overall Rating and brief synopsis as guides. For example:

[Lenin Internet Library](#)

Comprehensive site containing dozens of examples of Lenin's writing organized by date, with built-in search capabilities.

(<http://www.marx2mao.org//Lenin/Index.html>)

Science

People advance science, and behind every great person is a great story. Help your students appreciate the human drama with primary source documents. Galileo, for example, led a remarkable life. Unfortunately, many of Galileo's letters were destroyed. However, his daughter's letters are preserved and are available online. Her perspective is especially interesting since she was a cloistered nun when Galileo was tried as part of the Inquisition!

Famous Person Search: Galileo

Refine your search: When you get a Search Results page, click on the Primary Sources tab. All the sites you get in a new Search Results page will be ones that contain primary sources.

For example:

[The Galileo Project at Rice University](#)

(<http://es.rice.edu/ES/humsoc/Galileo/>)

From this site, click [Galileo's Daughter](#) and scroll to the letter dated 2 July 1633 (the month he was sentenced) for a wonderful and unique perspective.

Language Arts

Even journalists with the best of intentions can let their bias show through their writings. *netTrekker* has a great section on famous journalists. Use it to gain a better perspective on the people that write the stories.

Drill Down: Language Arts > Journalism > Famous People in Journalism

Dozens of journalists are available in this category. For example:

Click on Bob Woodward, then choose the Primary Sources tab.

Lecture by Bob Woodward at Kansas State University

(<http://www.newss.ksu.edu/WEB/News/NewsReleases/woodwardlecturetext.html>)

A transcript of a question and answer session given by Bob Woodward in March of 2000.

Topics cover Watergate and President Clinton.

4. Multimedia Matches Multiple Learning Styles

Are the computers in your classroom or lab just being used for word processing? Consider using the Web to collect more than just text information—give your students the opportunity to build multimedia projects. In addition to connecting to different learning styles (verbal, logical, kinesthetic, musical, spatial, interpersonal and intrapersonal), you are utilizing the wonderful multimedia features computers provide.

Give your students room with this one—they will jump at the chance to use more than words to convey their thoughts. Have them find aspects of the topic that they think emphasize the important points, like an anchorperson. Then, turn them loose with *netTrekker* to download or copy and paste these pieces of media into a variety of media formats: newsletter, desktop slide presentation, collage, HyperStudio stack, or Web page. Assess their work by how appropriate the media is and how well it supports the topic.

As the Internet matures (remember, the Web is only a few years old) more media will be interactive, giving your students more opportunity to learn by doing.

How does netTrekker help?

netTrekker really helps search for multiple media with the “Content Type” feature. Students can use *netTrekker* to locate Pictures / Illustrations, Audio, Video, Software (downloads), Books / Bibliographies, Biographies, Quotes, Formulas, Charts / Maps, Learning Exercises and more!

What are some examples?

Social Studies

The Internet has many wonderful examples of multimedia for the Social Studies: full-color images, audio, short movies, and interactive lesson exercises. *netTrekker* is packed with sites that make learning fun. Wonderful examples appear in Psychology where your students can actually take part in experiments online! You can register your class in order to download data. For example:

Drill Down: Social Studies > Psychology > Personality > Psychological Tests

From the list of sites at the bottom of the page, choose [Psychological Experiments on the Internet](http://psychexps.olemiss.edu/) (<http://psychexps.olemiss.edu/>)

PsychExperiments is an on-line cognitive and social psychology laboratory site. It consists of a set of interactive experiments, a cumulative data archive, download utilities for both data and experiment source code, downloadable Excel macros for analyzing data from the experiments, and support materials for those who want to use and/or develop experiments at the site.

Note: A free, downloadable “plug-in” (software that adds capabilities to your web browser) is needed in order to participate in these experiments.

Two other examples of sites (out of thousands) with different types of media include:

Drill Down: Social Studies > Law > Law and Society > Kinds of Laws > Court Decisions.

Refine Search: place a checkmark next to Audio and Pictures/illustrations (Content Type)

For example:

[The Oyez Project](http://oyez.nwu.edu/)

Law US Supreme Court Multimedia Database

(<http://oyez.nwu.edu/>)

A searchable multimedia database of United States Supreme Court decisions, including easy-to-read abstracts that quickly summarize each case.

Drill Down: Social Studies > U.S. History

Famous Person Keyword Search Term: “Lewis”, click [Meriwether Lewis](#).

Refine Search: place a checkmark next to Audio and Pictures/illustrations (Content Type)

For example:

[PBS Online: The Journeys of Lewis & Clark](http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/people/i_r/lewis.htm)

(http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/people/i_r/lewis.htm)

Comprehensive site based on the film by Ken Burns - "The Journey of the Corps of Discovery." Site provides archives, thoughts of expert historians, and an interactive story, in which student leads the expedition.

Science

Sometimes, looking at diagrams in a textbook just doesn't do the trick. Take sound waves, for example. In a book, the waves are represented by static curved lines. On the Internet, waves can be dynamic—they move and morph and have different effects depending on your vantage point.

Drill Down: Science > Physics > Waves > Sound Waves > Doppler Effect

Refine Search: place a checkmark next to Audio and Video (Content Type)

choose from one of several interactive examples, such as:

[Waves Animation/Doppler Effect and Sonic Boom](http://www.gmi.edu/~drussell/Demos/doppler/doppler.html)

(<http://www.gmi.edu/~drussell/Demos/doppler/doppler.html>)

Incredible set of animations demonstrating the Doppler effect and shockwaves resulting from supersonic aircraft.

Foreign Language

Learning a new language is difficult. It is even more difficult if the only time your student's hear the language is in class. Offer your students a chance to see and hear a new language spoken.

Drill Down: Foreign Language > Spanish > General Reference >

Refine Search: place a checkmark next to Audio (Content Type). For example:

[Dictionary of Spanish and English](#)

A relatively simple link to find words from Spanish-English and English-Spanish. Many results have audio capabilities so you can hear the words pronounced correctly (both English and Spanish).

5. Connect the Present to the Past

A variation on the “why are we studying this” question is the “why don’t we study anything that happens in our life” question. Address this question and your own curriculum needs by studying current events.

Consider, for a change, working from the present backward. History is an easy example, but this strategy can be used with Language Arts (trace the roots of a modern example of a genre); Science (trace important discoveries by starting with a current discovery); or Philosophy/Religion (trace the philosophical underpinnings of a current debate).

A variation of this strategy is to begin from the American perspective and work outward. Do this by starting with current events coverage in an American newspaper, then read about it from another angle, such as the British. (Newspapers in a foreign language such as French, German, Italian, Portuguese, or Russian? No problem. Try one of the translation websites, such as <http://babel.altavista.com/> to translate into English! It is not a perfect translation, but probably adequate for translating a newspaper article).

How does netTrekker help?

netTrekker devotes an entire section to current events. You can find newspapers from all over the nation and all over the world. Within each subject area—Health, Science, Religion—there are also links to specific news sources in that field.

What are some examples?

Examples of this strategy abound: look at the Elian Gonzalez story through the eyes of the Miami Herald, as opposed to the Chicago Tribune. Wouldn’t it be interesting to compare the Detroit News’ treatment of the Firestone Tire recall case with the view from the L.A. Times? How would the Orlando Sentinel write a story about a new Disney theme park in Europe—and how would it compare to the major Parisian newspaper, LeMonde?

Use the occasion of the latest space shuttle launch to step back into the history of the space program. *netTrekker* has an entire category related to the history of space exploration (Science > Space Science > Space Exploration > History).

(Remember, all these are current events and are may be dated when you read this. Choose your own current event to examine.)

Put it all Together: Sample Lesson Plan on the Electoral College

Overview:

This learning model builds critical thinking skills that will enable students to better understand the Electoral College: how it works, reason for existence, pro's and con's of current system and alternatives, and how the College impacts campaign strategy.

Learning Objectives:

- | | |
|--|------|
| 1. To describe the electoral college; | 6-12 |
| 2. To explore a variety of information sources; | 6-12 |
| 3. To calculate the minimum number of states necessary to win the election; | 6-12 |
| 4. To compare and contrast the direct method of election with the Electoral College; | 6-12 |
| 5. To recommend a choice between direct election and election through the College; | 6-12 |
| 6. To formulate a campaign strategy, based on what students learn about the Electoral College, to win the general election with the fewest number of states. | 9-12 |

Instructional Process:

Getting Started

Ask students to:

- keep a folder as a portfolio for their *OneVote* research and materials;
- warm-up activity: ask students to vote for a class captain...but don't take the time to vote—the point is not to elect a student, rather to provide a chance for students to recognize that “criteria” are important before voting (and without established criteria groups may choose leaders in unpredictable ways).

Gathering Information

Ask students to:

- search the Internet for three websites describing the Electoral College. (see Suggestion A);
- write down three key points about the Electoral College: why was it developed? how are the number of electors determined? what determines how the votes are cast?
- show the reference to the Electoral College in the Constitution (see Suggestion B);
- identify the number of Electoral votes for your state (see Suggestion C).

Divide students into groups and assign each group the responsibility for researching these topics.

Processing Information

Ask each group to:

- share the findings of their research;
- calculate the minimum number of states needed to win the election (note: Nebraska and Maine do not have a “winner-take-all” system.) (see Suggestion D);
- compare and contrast the direct method of election with the Electoral College.
- present their findings to the class.

Ask students to take notes on the presentations.

Applying Information

Ask students to:

- discuss, as a class, the pros and cons of the electoral system;
- recommend a choice between the Electoral College or direct election by citizens; and
- formulate a campaign strategy, based on the Electoral College, that wins the general election for either Gore or Bush on issues you and your class select. For example:

- identify the states most likely to be affected by the issue(s) selected, using criteria such as demographic data and geographic location (see Suggestion C);
- assess the Electoral College impact of the state based on the number of votes;
- using media literacy concepts, craft a 15 second TV spot targeting the critical mass of voters in support (or opposition) of the issue.

Suggestions for Internet Searching using netTrekker.com

Go to <http://www.netTrekker.com>. *netTrekker* is a new Internet search engine that organizes topics by school subjects. Educators review all of the sites for content and age appropriateness. *netTrekker* has a built-in capability to refine a search based on different points of view, by media content, and primary source documents. *netTrekker* also provides an online teacher's guide for integrating the Internet into lesson planning.

Suggestion A: *Electoral College Websites*

Explore by subject category in *netTrekker*. To find appropriate sites, "drill-down" (point and click) on the topic links:

Social Studies > American Government > Politics and the Election Process > Elections > Structure of Elections > Electing the President > Electoral College System

This category lists Electoral College sites of general information that are approved by educators.

Suggestion B: *Reference in Constitution*

Explore by subject category:

Social Studies > American Government > Foundations of American Democracy > The Constitution

Refine your search result on "Constitution." To do so, click on the **Primary Sources** tab on your Search Results bar **OR** click **Refine Search** (in the gold bar at the top of the page). Under "Content Type," click **Primary Source Document** then click the **Show Results** button at the bottom of the page. You have narrowed your search to include only primary source documents.

Suggestion C: *Calculate Number of Votes*

Search by subject category in Suggestion A; then refine your search result to see only sites with learning exercises. To do so, click on the **Learning Exercises** tab on your Search Results bar **OR** click **Refine Search** (in the gold bar at the top of the page). Under "Content Type," click "Learning Exercises" then click **Show Results**. Here, you will find a website with an interactive calculator that helps your students run "what if" scenarios and their impact on the election.

Suggestion D: *Build your own!*

Using this lesson plan, create your own that takes advantage of the wonderful Internet resources available. For example, examine the role of the News Media or the issues of interest to your students: education, crime, or morals. You can also use *netTrekker* to foster interdisciplinary inquiry. Use the Tabs on your Search Result pages or the gray boxes in *netTrekker* labeled "Related Topics" to explore parallel issues.