

Recommended Informational Websites

Informational websites are a rich resource for informational text. Listed below are sources of links to high-quality websites. Government sites are generally copyright free so that materials from them can be copied and duplicated. Unless noted otherwise, sites are free. Links are cold. They need to be pasted into your browser.

EPA < <http://www2.epa.gov/students> > Provides links to articles, games, quizzes, and videos about the environment, including air quality, climate, energy, pollution, and recycling. For instance, In the Games, Quizzes, and More Link, the Cool Stuff sublink leads to the “Ground Water Story” and Interactive “Water Cycle,” which contain easy to understand explanations of key environmental concepts and relate to current concern about water shortages. IL K-12

netTrekker (Knovation) < <https://www.knovationlearning.com/school-solutions/nettrekker/>> Provides links to thousands of digital Internet resources that have been reviewed and assigned readability levels. New resources are added daily. Tools for students include variable speed read-aloud, translation, and citation help. Features extensive resources for students and teachers. Subscription service. IL K-12.

Fact Hound <www.FactHound.com> 1,600+ websites selected to extend information in Capstone books. A number of publishers provide databases of information or websites related to topics covered in their books. Readers access the information or sites by going to the designated website and entering a code, book ID number, title, keyword, or ISBN.

***4Kids.org** <<http://4kids.org/>> Produced at the University of Kansas by a team of educators and students, describes and provides access to safe, high-quality websites.

Created as a newspaper supplement, a new edition appears weekly.

Each week three reviews of websites are published along with “Ask Amy,” a feature that invites readers to ask questions about technology and the Internet. Other ongoing features include “Kid Quest,” a quiz about the content of the internet site reviewed, and “Speak Out,” a question about an issue to which students can respond with a short essay. Also presents games and videos. An archive is maintained. RL IL 4-8 4-5

High-Quality Informational Websites

The following sites are devoted to specific areas or topics. Estimated interest levels (IL) and reading levels RL) are noted. All of the sites are of high-quality. Those that are marked with an asterisk are of particular high quality.

Abraham Lincoln Research Site <<http://rogerjnorton.com/Lincoln2.html>> Has extensive print and pictorial resources covering all aspects of Lincoln's life. I L5-8
RL-5-6

Age of the Dinosaurs <http://www.bbc.co.uk/sn/prehistoric_life/dinosaurs/>. Extensive information with many film clips. IL 4-8 RL 5-6

All About Birds (Cornell Lab of Ornithology)
<<http://www.allaboutbirds.org/page.aspx?pid=1189I>> Information on more than 500 species. Fairly easy to read with illustrations and maps. IL 3-8+ RL 4-6

America's Story from America's Library (Library of Congress)
<<http://www.americaslibrary.gov/>>

Meet Amazing Americans. Presents brief biographies with illustrations of famous Americans. IL-3-8 RL-4.

Jump Back in Time. Provides an overview of an era in American history and a number of related articles that portray key figures and events of the era. IL-4-8
RL-5.

Explore the States. Gives a brief history of each state and brief descriptions of interesting events and customs in the state. IL-4-8 RL-5.

America's Story sites include sets of primary sources, which vary in topic and reading level.

Animal Fact Guide < <http://www.animalfactguide.com>> Extensive information about animals. Could be good for building vocabulary. Many of the difficult words are defined in context. Has worksheet for taking notes. Lesson plans and other teaching resources are available. IL 3-8+ RL: 4-6

ARKive (Wildscreen Arkive) < www.arkive.org> Contains descriptions and outstanding photos and films of wildlife, with a focus on endangered species. Also has articles related to wildlife and conservation. IL 4-12 RL 6-8+.

***BBC Primary History** <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primaryhistory/>>

History is told from a UK point of view, but segments on ancient history and world leaders would be appropriate. Easy to read, broken into segments, has a click-on glossary, and very brief factual quiz at the end. Has gallery of photos, timeline, and many activities. IL 3-5 RL 3-4

BrainPOP < <https://www.brainpop.com/> > Has hundreds of movies in seven curriculum areas. Also has quizzes, short-response questions, vocabulary exercises, graphic organizers, added information, and lesson plans. Has several editions: BrainPOP, Junior Brainpop (K-3) BrainPOP Español, BrainPOP ESL, and BrainPOP Francais. BrainPOP is a subscription service, but has some free materials. IL K-12 RL K-12s

Climate Kids: NASA's Eyes on the Earth < <http://climatekids.nasa.gov/>>.

Features articles on weather and climate and the impact of climate change on air, oceans, fresh water, carbon, travels, plants and animals, and technology. Has extensive graphics, including animated illustrations and video clips. Good use of subheads that pose questions: "Why is Earth getting warmer? How do we know what Earth was like long ago?" IL 3-8 RL: 4-5

Building Big (PBS) <<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/buildingbig/index.html>>

Articles explain how bridges, domes, skyscrapers, dams, and tunnels were built. Has illustrations and charts and a click-on glossary. IL 5-8+ RL 5

***Enchanted Learning** <<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/Home.html>> Extensive range of informational articles, activity sheets, and graphics. Has 35,000 web pages. Free sample pages or small subscription fee. IL K-12

Energy Kids <<http://www.eia.gov/kids/>> Extensive information about energy production, consumption, & saving energy. Glossary, energy calculator, riddles, puzzles, & a quiz. Good use of headings. IL 5-8+ RL 5-6.

Everyday Mysteries < <http://www.loc.gov/rr/scitech/mysteries/> > Library of Congress.

Asks and answers questions such as, "Why does chopping onions make you cry?" Provides links to websites. IL 4-8 RL 4-5

Fact MonsterTM <<http://www.factmonster.com/>> Information in major subject areas is presented. Features dictionary, almanac, atlas, *Columbia Encyclopedia* (6th ed.). Has games, timeline, fun quizzes. IL 4-8+ RL 4-6.

***Highlights Kids** <<http://www.highlightskids.com/>> Features animated and read along stories with spoken word-by-word highlighting and articles on a variety of topics. Has click-on science questions such as, “How do squid change color?” and “Why can’t penguins fly?” IL K-6 RL varies.

Lemelson Center for the Study of Invention and Innovation/ Invention Stories

(Smithsonian) < <http://invention.si.edu/explore/invention-stories> >

<<http://invention.smithsonian.org/home/>>. Tells the stories of a number of inventions, such as the electric guitar, Kevlar, Velcro, and others. Also explores sources of inspiration for inventions. IL 5-8 RL 5-6.

***Kids Discover Spotlight** <<http://www.kidsdiscover.com/spotlight/>> Key topics are explored in brief (Quick Reads) and extended (Spotlights) informational articles and Infographics, which are explanations of key concepts supported by a diagram or other visual. Spotlights are accompanied by brief quizzes. Many of these can be downloaded or accessed for free. Others may be purchased. Also has a wide variety of informational apps and a periodical, *Kids Discover*. IL 4-8+ RL 5-7.

Meet Our Animals (Smithsonian National Zoological Park)

<<http://nationalzoo.si.edu/Animals/default.cfm>>. Provides descriptions of a variety of animals. Has numerous photos and some film clips. Features a video cam for the pandas. IL all ages RL 5-6

My Plate Kids’ Place <<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/kids/index.html>>

Presents games, activity sheets, videos, songs, and recipes related to healthy eating and exercise. IL 2-5 RL 3-4

NASA for Educators < <http://www.nasa.gov/> > Has numerous resources for K-4, 5-8, and 9-12. Illustrated articles, such as, “What are clouds?” “What is a satellite?” “What is Jupiter?” are presented but at different levels: K-4 (RL 2-3) and 5-8 (RL 5-7).

NASA Videoclips <<http://www.nasa.gov/audience/foreducators/nasaclips/index.html>>

Features weather, space, and other STEM clips specially designed for students. As clip is being shown keywords such as *habitat* are flashed on screen so vocabulary is developed.

National Aquarium <<http://aqua.org/explore/animals>> Provides photos and information on hundreds of animals. IL 3-8+ RL 4-6.

National Geographic Kids <<http://kids.nationalgeographic.com>> Presents articles, photos, videos about animals, geography, nature, and other topics. Also has games and quizzes. IL 2-8 RL 4-5.

Natural History Notebooks <<http://nature.ca/notebooks/english/mammpg.htm>>

Describes more than 250 species of animals in words and photos. IL 4-8+ RL 5-6

Newsela. <Newsela.com> News articles written at 5 Lexile levels presented daily. Archive available. Has a regular and elementary version. IL 3-8+ RL 400-1200

Ology (American Museum of Natural History)

<<http://www.amnh.org/explore/ology/expeditions>> Readers select articles from anthropology, archaeology, paleontology, marine biology, and other areas. Presents experiments, interviews, quizzes, & activities. IL 3-8 RL 3-4

The Presidents < <https://www.whitehouse.gov/about-the-white-house/presidents/> > Brief biographies of presidents and first ladies. IL 3-8+ RL 5-6.

SciJinks <<http://scijinks.jpl.nasa.gov/>> (NOAA & NASA). Contains articles -many in question-and-answer format, photos, & videos about weather. Also has games and graphic adventures. IL 6-8+ RL 4-6.

Seaworld Animal Books < <http://seaworld.org/>>. Provides factual information about a variety of animals. Has many photos. Uses technical language. IL 6-8 RL 7-8

Smithsonian's History Explorer < historyexplorer.si.edu>.

Wide range of topics are explored through primary sources, reviewed websites, and other resources. Can select grade level: K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12. IL K-12.

Smithsonian Tween Tribune < <http://tweentribune.com/> >Features daily news articles, photos, graphics, audio/video in current events, history, art, culture & science. Contains archives, self-scoring quizzes, teacher-student sharing. Has four versions: K-4, 5-8, 9-12, & Spanish. Articles can be read at 4 Lexile levels. IL K-12 RL 2-12

Smithsonian National Zoological Park Zoo Just for Kids Get the Facts

< <https://nationalzoo.si.edu/animals> > Presents illustrated articles about varied animals. IL 3-8 RL 5-6

Starchild <<http://starchild.gsfc.nasa.gov/docs/StarChild/StarChild.html>>

Portrays solar system in 2 levels: Level 1: 2-3. Level 2: 4-5. Level 1 can be read aloud. Has film clips and click-on glossary. Also available in Spanish, German, Portuguese, and Italian. IL 2-5+ RL 2-5

State Facts for Kids (U. S. Census Bureau) <<http://www.census.gov/schools/facts/>>

Provides information about each state and compares current and prior statistics. IL 3-8
RL 3-4

USDA Image Gallery < <https://www.ars.usda.gov/oc/images/image-gallery/>>

Features library of 2,000 images of animals, farms, crops, insects, food, and plants.

USGS Science Resources for Primary Grades (K–6) <<https://www.usgs.gov/science-support/osqi/yes/resources-teachers/grade-k-2>>. Maps and well-illustrated articles provide information about animals, geography, geology, storms, natural disasters, water, and other topics. IL K-6 RL-varies.

Walking with Dinosaurs (BBC) <<https://www.bbcearth.com/walking-with-dinosaurs/>>.

Describes major dinosaurs in detail. Extensive illustrations, including a number of charts and diagrams are presented. IL 3-8 RL 5-6

***Wonderopolis** < <https://www.wonderopolis.org/wonders/> /> Includes hundreds of wonder questions, such as as: “Why are there different size batteries? How do you build a tunnel underwater? What is a volcano? What does the moon do? The question is answered with a text accompanied by a brief quiz, a vocabulary activity, film clips, and photos. Text-to-speech with highlighting of text is available. IL 4-8 RL 5-6

The World Factbook (Central Intelligence Agency)

<<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>>

Contains basic updated information about every country in the world. Also has maps. IL 6-8 RL 7-8.

Youngzine < <http://www.youngzine.org/>> News, features, interesting facts are presented. Has visuals, videos, comics, games. Readers invited to express views, submit articles, & blog. Has teacher resources. Il 4-8+ RL 4-6+.

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