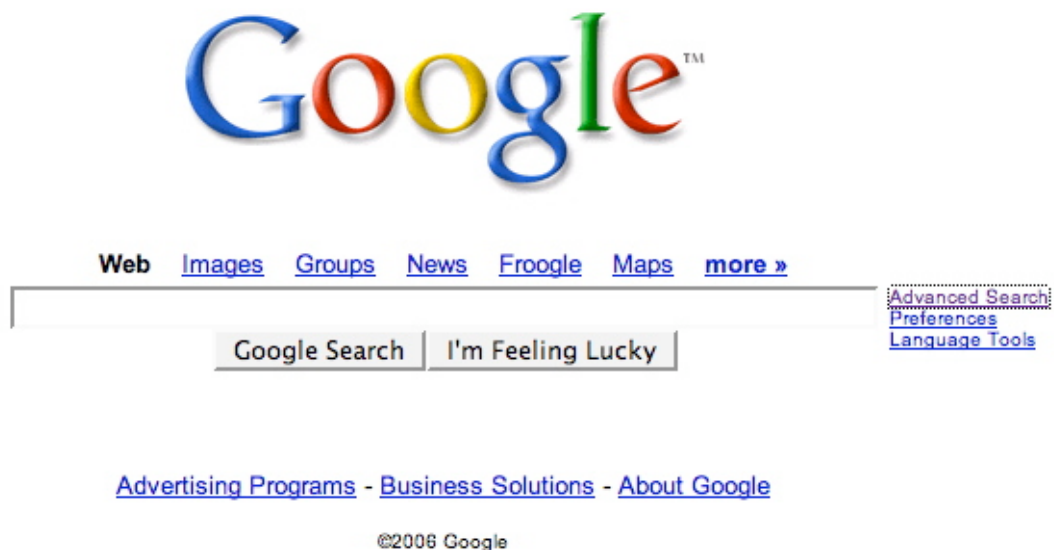


Better Searching

While all of us are familiar with search engines such as Google and Yahoo, not everyone uses these tools to their fullest potential. There are a few tips that can help users obtain better results with any search engine. In addition to investigating these tips, we will take a look at some advanced features and additional tools associated with Google.

Searching Techniques

Inserting a word or a series of words into a search engine may not be the most effective way to obtain your desired results. In order to search better, it is useful to know how search engines work. Google treats a series of words in a number of ways. Google initially searches for the first word as if it is the most important so it is important that you enter your words in order of importance. Google also presents initial results for strings of words as if they were connected by the Boolean operator “and”. This means that a string of two words submitted in a search must both be included in any results. After this series of “and” connected words is presented, Google will present the words connected by the Boolean operator “or”. This means that either one of the words must be included, but not both. If you are searching for a phrase, you want to insert quotation marks around the phrase. For example, entering “I love ESL magazine” within quotation marks will not provide results for each of these words in isolation or in any combination, but only as a unique phrase.



In the main Google window you can also search only for images by clicking on the “images” link just above the text search box. This may be a useful way for teachers to access and archive images for language instruction.

In order to simplify these procedures you can click on the “advanced” button to the right of the text search area. This window allows you to customize searches in a number of ways. You can choose to perform each of the searches above as well as a number of other customized searches. You can choose to receive results in a specific language, specific type of file format or from a certain domain (such as <http://google.com> or <http://eslmag.com>).

You can also search for web pages that link to a specific page. This may provide insight into related sources of information. By using the Advanced Google search tool you can also limit the number of results and filter results for adult content.

Google Advanced Search [Advanced Search Tips](#) | [About Google](#)

Find results: with all of the words, with the exact phrase, with at least one of the words, without the words. 10 results Google Search

Language: Return pages written in any language

File Format: Only return results of the file format any format

Date: Return web pages updated in the anytime

Occurrences: Return results where my terms occur anywhere in the page

Domain: Only return results from the site or domain e.g. google.com, .org [More info](#)

Usage Rights: Return results that are not filtered by license [More info](#)

SafeSearch: No filtering Filter using [SafeSearch](#)

Page-Specific Search

Similar: Find pages similar to the page Search e.g. www.google.com/help.html

Links: Find pages that link to the page Search

More

By clicking on the link “more” above the text search box, you can access a number of additional tools and software provided by the ever-expanding realm of Google. Among the many other tools available through Google.com is Google Earth. Google Earth is a free download that allows users to fully navigate the planet in a 3 dimensional experience. Users can rotate the Earth and zoom in on any desired location for an up-close, detailed view. In many cases, you can get to such a level of detail that houses and vehicles can be identified. The view represents an exceptionally current perspective since images are updated daily by satellites. I recently had an Iraqi student in my class who was surprised to see how different his neighborhood looked in the current images compared to what he remembered just a few months back. While this tool may seem at first to be a novelty it may also have a number of classroom uses. Students can engage in a variety of individual and group activities using Google Earth.

Some Suggested classroom uses for Google Earth

- Asking and answering questions as they navigate and negotiate locations across the Earth
- Giving navigational directions to one another as they zoom in on a desired location
- Engaging in information gap activity where each student has some piece of a set of instructions guiding them toward a specific location
- Identifying specific locations associated with historic events
- Identifying locations associated with cultural aspects of a current discussion
- Identifying locations related to current events that may be a focus of discussion in the class
- Describing geographic characteristics of a specific location as well as various environmental characteristics

Of course, this tool may be best used as a primer for a number of discussions or activities. Having the ability to take a current look at places around the world may help our students to appreciate our interconnectedness or to share their homeland with one another.

There are certainly a number of other possible uses of Google for the classroom, including a number of the additional tools provided under the “more” link. Some of these will be discussed in future installments of this column.