Using Search Engines effectively for planning ESL lessons
Outline

- Introduction
- How A Search Engine Works
- Types of Information
- Choosing a search Engine
- Engine Keywords
- Assessing the results
- Planning Process
- Example Lesson Plan
- Conclusion
Introduction

- Google holds approximately 14,250,000,000 pages written in English
- Vast Teaching Resource
- Challenge is to sift through it
Web Crawlers

Indexed

Sorted

net, ca, us com, org mil, gov, edu
jp, cn, tw, au de, uk, it, pl, fr
br, kr, nl unknown
Other Engines

- Use own databases e.g. Encyclopaedias & Dictionaries
- Customisable engines restrict their searches to limited Websites or allow user prioritisation
Types of Info

- Vocabulary enrichment information
  - Definition
  - Frequency
  - Pronunciation
  - Usage
- Topic information
- Ready Made lesson plans
## Vocabulary Enrichment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 Dialect</th>
<th>2 Own DB</th>
<th>3 Verbal Pronunciation</th>
<th>4 Definitions</th>
<th>5 Searches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ask.com</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>D,E,T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dictionary.com</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>D,E,T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask Oxford</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>D,Q,N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merriam-Webster</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>D,T,W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambridge</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>IPA</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>D,I, PV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British National Corpus</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>PS,W</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wicktionary</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>D,E,T</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COLUMNS**

1 Dialect  
2 Own DB  
3 Verbal Pronunciation  
4 Definitions  
5 Searches

www.jamesabela.co.uk
Wikipedia – Encyclopaedia
IMDB – Movie reviews, information & trailers
igougo – Travel Reviews
Lastminute.com – Holiday information
World Factbook – Country information
The Star – Malaysian news
Ready Made Lesson Plans

% of results that led to a contribution to a lesson plan

Searches:
- Travel lesson
- Shopping lesson
- Jobs lesson
- Collocations lesson
- Tenses lesson
- Prepositions lesson
- Past perfect lesson
- IELTS lesson
- TOEFL lesson

www.jamesabela.co.uk
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Search</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Apple</td>
<td>apple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+The Apple</td>
<td>apple the / the apple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“the apple”</td>
<td>the apple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NOT THE APPLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bass</td>
<td>music &amp; fishing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bass –music</td>
<td>Bass NOT music</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assessing The Results

- Results measure of frequency
- Also assess topic popularity
- IT bias

14,250,000,000 English pages
Brown's word 5000 >18,000,000
“Bee in the bonnet” 10,000 pages

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Planning Process

- Aim of Lesson & Assumed knowledge
- Material
  - Form (Grammar / Structure)
  - Vocabulary – Meaning & Use
  - Context / Topic
- Lesson Walkthrough & Whiteboard layouts
**Example Lesson**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aim of lesson</td>
<td>To write a complaint letter about a hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence</td>
<td>Students produce complaint letter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumed Knowledge of Students</td>
<td>Upper Intermediate to Advanced level English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

www.jamesabela.co.uk
Example Lesson – Material

Context Material

- Engine: google.com.my
  Search: “poor quality hotel Malta”
- Result: Description of poor hotel in Malta
  Information from: http://www.travel-library.com/hotels/europe/malta/bugibba/topaz_hotel~0~75639.html

Writing Example

- Engine: Google Coop
- Search “complaint letter hotel”
- Result: Proforma complaint letter
- Information from: http://www.savvychicks.com/samplecomplaint.html
## Example Lesson – Material

### Form
- Engine: Google Coop
- Search: “active passive”
- Result: Guide to the active and passive voice
- Information from: [http://esl.about.com/library/grammar/blpassive.htm](http://esl.about.com/library/grammar/blpassive.htm)

### Vocabulary
- Engine: Cambridge Dictionary
- Search: “quality”
- Result: IPA & definition of the word
- Information from: [http://dictionary.cambridge.org/](http://dictionary.cambridge.org/)
James Abela ELT

Example Lesson – Layouts

Attractions
Pictures

• Engine: igougo
• Search: “Malta”
• Result: Pictures of Maltese attractions

Which of these attractions would you like to visit?

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Conclusions – Getting Results

- General Engines Most Data, but difficult to pinpoint info
- Specialist Engine better yields
- Customised Engines – Benefits of both
- Better searching = Better Results
Conclusions – Planning Process

6 areas that Engines can assist:

- Notions and topics
- Communicative situations
- Functions
- Vocabulary
- Pronunciation
- Grammar