

# Democracy in Ancient Greece

## Handout 3.3a: Using Search Engines

A search engine is a computer program that searches for keywords on the Internet and returns a list of documents in which they were found. There are many different types of search engines that you can use to conduct research. It is important to know how they work in order to use them effectively. Using more than one search engine is helpful for getting good results.

[www.google.com](http://www.google.com) – This is a very popular search engine. While the process for how it works is complicated, it ranks the websites it provides for your topic by how many other sites link to that site. Google basically ranks sites by how “popular” they are. Google is a good search engine to use when you know what kind of information you are looking for.

[www.teoma.com](http://www.teoma.com) – This search engine works in the opposite way that Google does. If you are looking for a website that links to a lot of other websites about your topic, Teoma is a good search engine to use. It is also good to use when you are unsure of what specific information about your topic you are looking for.

[www.askjeeves.com](http://www.askjeeves.com) and [www.yahooligans.com](http://www.yahooligans.com) – These search engines provide links that are relevant to students.

For a complete list of search engines and what each one is good for, use this resource page from Noodle Tools:

<http://www.noodletools.com/debbie/literacies/information/5locate/adviceengine.html>

### Reading a URL

A URL ([www.website.com](http://www.website.com)) is the web address for a website. There are clues in the URL that tell you what kind of website it is before you look at it. Being able to read a URL can save you time when you are doing research.

Here is a list of extensions (the end of a web address) and what they mean. Looking at the extension can tell you a lot about a website.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>.edu</b> Education (most U.S. universities)        | <b>.com</b> Company (usually .co in the U.K.) |
| <b>.k12</b> US school site (not all schools use this) | <b>.org</b> Any organization                  |
| <b>.ac</b> Academic institution (outside of US)       | <b>.gov</b> Government agency                 |
| <b>.sch</b> School site (some schools use this)       | <b>.net</b> Network                           |

Some websites are created by individuals that are not part of a school, business, or organization. Personal websites like blogs can contain useful information, but they may also contain biased information.

Some clues that will help you identify a personal website are a person’s name in the URL or a ~ (tilda) or % (percent sign). Avoid using a personal website when you are doing research.