

SIRS Discoverer Quick Reference Guide

SIRS Discoverer® is a full-text article database that helps develop researching, reading, writing, language and computer skills for the young researcher. Students can do research, read stories, learn about important people, places and events, find fun projects to do and much more. Students can also access Photo Essays that portray social issues and global concepts through colorful photos accompanied by brief text.

School Access: _____ Home Access: _____

NAVIGATING SIRS DISCOVERER ON THE WEB

Search Options: Articles may be returned by relevance or date order.

- **Subject Tree Search** - provides 15 broad categories that are further divided into topics and subtopics, creating a "subject tree." This search method allows you to explore many different fields without limiting you to predetermined topics.



- **Subject Headings Search** - is useful when you have a research topic in mind. Articles are indexed according to Library of Congress Subject Headings.

- **Keyword Search** - is useful when you have a subject in mind. The Advanced Search Option allows you to also search for Authors and Titles. You may search the text for specific words by using one of five search options:

Boolean Operators (AND, OR, NOT)

AND operator locates articles that contain all the keywords

Example: girls **AND** sports will return articles with both keywords

OR operator locates articles that contain at least one of the keywords

Example: sports **OR** athletics will return articles with one of the keywords

NOT operator eliminates articles that contain words or phrases

Example: animals **NOT** pets will return articles that contain the word animal but not the word pet

Phrase Search - allows you to search article text for keyword phrases. The phrase must be enclosed in quotation marks to ensure multiple words appearing next to one another in a specific order will be found within the article text.

Example: "greenhouse effect" will locate all articles with this phrase

Truncation - a shortcut used to indicate alternate word endings in your search. This is a quick and easy way to include plurals, tense variations, and alternate spellings.

Example: the search environ* will return articles that contain the words environment, environments, environmental, etc.

Natural Language Search - a way of searching for articles in simple language without having to use Boolean operators.

Example: if you are looking for articles about life on other planets, you can conduct a Natural Language Search by typing - What is a Martian?

SIRS DISCOVERER REFERENCE FEATURES

These features are available from the opening screen and at the bottom of each screen.

- **Current Events** - encourages students to keep abreast of social and political issues by updating articles daily.
- **Spotlight of the Month** - each month a new topic is featured that encourages research and awareness of timely topics such as: May '02 - Asian Heritage Awareness; Oct. '02 - World of Plants
- **World Almanac for Kids** - is an additional source of full-text articles.
- **Funk & Wagnalls New Encyclopedia** - provides an additional reference source.

OTHER FEATURES

- **Reading Levels** - the Flesh Readability Formula is used to determine articles' reading level
Easy = 1st - 4th grade; Moderate = 5th - 7th grade; Challenging = 8th grade and up
- **Legend** - displays the icons for pictures, activities, biographies (people) and fictional articles. If available, click on the camera icon following the article to retrieve a list of accompanying pictures. All articles have the yellow apple icon to the right of the title. Click this icon to view related subjects.

Source & Summary				Subjects	Pictures	Activity	Fiction	People
General	Easy	Moderate	Challenging			a	f	p

These database features are accessible from the opening screen under **Featured Content**:

- **Biographies** - provides an alphabetical listing of thousands of individuals in all walks of life.
- **Photo Essays** - a collection of photographs and accompanying short narratives based on a common theme.
- **Pictures** - a centralized list of all graphics contained in the database.
- **Maps** - a collection of approximately 300 Magellan maps available in HTML and PDF formats.
- **Activities** - a list of categories containing articles with activities.

These helpful features are available from the opening page and/or full-text article pages:

- **Dictionary and Thesaurus** - is available from every screen. Using your browser edit function, you can cut and paste words from an article into the dictionary search field to define a word, check spelling, and identify synonyms.
- **E-mail and Print** - you may send an article and/or graphic from the E-mail window that appears on each full-text article screen or you may print complete or partial sections of articles.
- **How to Cite** - provides descriptions and examples on MLA and APA citation format.
- **Help** - provides examples of each search method and details search capabilities.
- **Quick Tips** - provide helpful hints on navigation, book marking articles, viewing and printing articles, troubleshooting and browser specifications.
- **Workbooks** - contain activities that help the users master the SIRS search methods and are available in HTML and PDF formats.
- **Educator's Guide** - provides teaching ideas, lessons, and answers to workbook exercises.
- **Tutorial** - provides an online instructional session about SIRS Discoverer usage and is excellent tool for first time users.
- **New Content and Hot Topics!** - you may explore new content and try sample searches using multiple search methods.