
ACTIVITY

Developing Reference Skills

Ravindra B. Tasildar

Focus: Reference Skills

Level: Postgraduate

Activity Type: Individual

Estimated Time: 50 minutes

Objectives

To develop reference skills by

- a) Acquainting students to different types of reference sources like dictionaries, research papers and Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETDs).
- b) Using keywords and Boolean operators for searching books and research articles.
- c) Browsing to know the meaning of different reference sources.

Materials: Mobile handsets with internet connection, Four Activity Sheets

Steps

1. The teacher talks about the importance of reference sources and introduces them to different types of print and non-print reference sources by comparing them for specific features.
2. Lead Activity (10 minutes): The teacher provides Activity Sheet 1 and asks students to search for the meaning of the word 'Dictionary' and enter the details in the activity sheet. An example is given in the sheet showing how to fill in the sheet. Students can search for as many dictionaries as they choose and enter details.
3. Main Activity: Browse for Books—The teacher demonstrates search

using keywords and Boolean operators, the university or college library's Web Online Public Access Catalogue (Web-OPAC). (See Screenshot below). Students are given a list of topics and asked to search for books and fill in Activity Sheet 2 within 15 minutes.

Screenshot: *College Website and Use of Boolean Operator 'AND'*

The screenshot displays the Osmania University Library website. At the top, there is a logo on the left and the text "Bharat Ratna Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Memorial Library (Formerly University Library) Osmania University" in the center. Below this, it says "Library with Distinction by Council of Higher Education (C.H.E.) ACCREDITED BY NAAC WITH 'A+' GRADE". On the right, it says "Osmania University Library".

The main navigation bar includes links for Home, About, My Library, Discussions, Message, New arrivals, Top stories, and Contact us. There are also links for Login, Select language, and Sign up.

The search interface is prominently displayed, featuring a search bar with a dropdown menu set to "Subject". Below the search bar, there are several rows of search criteria, each with a dropdown menu set to "AND" and a "Search" button. The criteria include:

- Author
- Title
- Keywords
- Classification number
- Accession number
- Anywhere

4. Browse for Research Papers—Students browse N-List or DELNET for research papers on a topic and enter the details in Activity Sheet 3 within 15 minutes.
5. Follow-up Activity: Students search for the meaning of a set of words and fill in Activity Sheet 4 within 10 minutes.
6. The teacher then can assigns homework to deepen reference skills.

Activity Sheet 1

Instruction to Students: *Browse the internet for the meaning of the word 'dictionary' and fill in the activity sheet. You can refer to as many dictionaries as you want. An example is worked out for you. You have **10 minutes** to complete this activity.*

Sr. No	Name of the Dictionary	Meaning of the Word 'Dictionary'	Full Address of the Website
1	Oxford Learner's Dictionary	A book or electronic resource that gives a list of the words of a language in alphabetical order and explains what they mean or gives a word for them	https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/dictionary
2			
3			

Activity Sheet 2

Instruction to Students: Use the web-OPAC of the university/college library, find at least five books on each topic, and enter the details in the sheet below within 15 minutes.

1. Study Skills
2. English for Academic Purposes
3. Lexicography

Sr. No.	Author (s)	Title of the Book	Classification Number	Accession Number	(Un) Availability of the Book
1					
2					
3					

Activity Sheet 3

Instruction to Students: Browse the internet and make a list of research papers on the topic 'Digital Humanities' and complete the table below within 15 minutes. You may use the N-List or DELNET account of your institution.

Sr No.	Author (s)	Title of the Article	Name of the Journal	Volume and Issue Number	Page Numbers	Access - Open / paid	Address of the Website
1							
2							
3							

Activity Sheet 4

Instruction to Students: Browse the internet, find the meanings of the following words and complete the following table within **10 minutes**.

Sr. No.	Words	Meanings of the Words	Name of the Online Resource	Address of the Website Visited
1	a) contents			
	b) index			
2	a) bibliography			
	b) references			
3	a) thesis			
	b) dissertation			

Homework: Search for PhD theses on (i) forensic linguistics' and (ii) 'language attrition'

Instructions:

- Visit (i) shodhganga - <https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in:8443/jspui/>
(ii) Edinburgh Research Archive - <https://era.ed.ac.uk/handle/1842/1256>
- Prepare a table with the researcher's name, research supervisor, thesis title, university and year and enter the details of the theses.

*Ravindra Tasildar is Professor and Head of the Department of English and Postgraduate Research Centre, Sangamner Nagarpalika Arts, D. J. Malpani Commerce and B.N. Sarda Science College (Autonomous), in Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra State.
tasildar@sangamnercollege.edu.in*