

Integrated Media Literacy Project

Weather Websites (Primary – Intermediate Grades)

Project Description

Creating weather websites, students can use Popplet (www.popplet.com) to compile their research information and start to plan each of the five different pages for their websites. They can then build multi-media projects for presentation using Weebly (<http://education.weebly.com>). Using these tools, students can explore weather using multi-media sources, and discuss how using different information sources enhances their understanding of different kinds of weather.

Before the Project

- Research and Learning: Classes should review curricular information before starting the project, and decide on a project focus (ie. Clouds, storms, etc.).
- Technical and Media Setup:
 - Teachers should run through these very easy-to-use websites in advance, to become generally familiar with their capabilities and limitations.
 - Popplet only allows 5 brainstorm charts per account – students should either create their own account, or teachers should create class emails to create standardized accounts each student can use to login (perhaps a set created on hotmail for the class, using numbers rather than names for future years' use).
 - Weebly allows you to set up a class and have kids login at <http://students.weebly.com>; this should be done in advance. It limits you to 5 pages for each student website.

First Online Session

- Students should create a folder on their desktop or in a secure computer location, labeled with their name.
- Teachers should introduce the class to Popplet – students should login and start creating their Popplets;
- Students can start weather research, using some of the following sites, among others:
 - Weather Wiz Kids: <http://www.weatherwizkids.com/>
 - The Weather Channel Kids: <http://theweatherchannelkids.com/>
 - Climate Kids: NASA: <http://climate.nasa.gov/kids/index.cfm>
 - Google Images: <http://images.google.com> *use specific search criteria and save full-sized images into student folder
 - Google search “great weather sites for kids” to find lots of others.
- Students should start by broadly searching the sites to look for their topics, then should use Popplet to create boxes to track common themes, categories or pieces of information. (ie. For cloud types: create popplet boxes for cumulus, stratus, cirrus and nimbus). Information can be cut and pasted into the boxes.

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- Pictures can be added to Popplets, within the boxes (which can be enlarged by clicking on the corner and dragging). Students should save all their images into their desktop folder, then click on the picture icon, and within that the computer icon, to add the picture.
- Students can also connect, drag and move boxes to organize their thoughts – before the end of the visit, students can organize their Popplet so that each section of the screen reflects what will be one page of their website. Remember that there will only be 5 pages allowed in Weebly; students should plan to have no more than this number of topics.

Second Online Session

- Students should login to their Popplets to bring up their research charts to review their findings from the previous session.
- Students should then login to their Weebly student account at <http://students.weebly.com>, and begin to create their websites:
 - Start by creating 5 pages using the Pages tab at the top of the website. Create one title and four topic pages, or one top image header and 5 topic pages;
 - Then go to each page and drag components from the top Elements tab in the order that you want them (you can reorder them at any time). Click and edit each section within each page, cutting and copying paste from the Popplet, and adding pictures from the desktop folder.
- Students can also revise the order of pages and Elements, reading over the content as the website comes together. This will take some time, and students should be encouraged to review their work for factual, grammatical and spelling errors.

Third Online Session

- Students should log in to Weebly and continue working on their websites.
- Peer feedback is important – before Publishing, each website should be reviewed by another student to check spelling, grammar, coherence and to suggest ideas to keep improving the site;
- When ready, the students should publish and present their final project, either to one or two other groups, or in a round-robin site-visit (rotating around the computer lab to visit each others' sites online). If time permits, teachers can also have students share their work with the whole class, and reflect on the process of the website's creation.
- To engage students in reflecting about their online learning, ask students:
 - How does using different information sources enhance our understanding of different kinds of weather?
 - Do you find the information easier to remember than when you just read it from a book? Why or why not?
 - How does using the Internet change how you find information?

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- How do you know if the information you find is true or accurate? If you don't know, how might you find out?

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