ABC Connect for Learning

Searching safely online

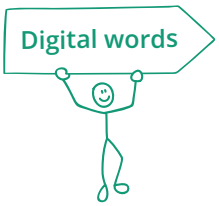
ABC LifeLiteracyCanada

Welcome to *Searching safely online*!

When you have a question about something, what do you do? Do you ask a friend or do an **internet** search? How can you tell if the information you're getting **online** is true? If you want to learn how to safely search the internet, this workbook is for you!

In this workbook, we'll explore some of the basics of internet searches and offer tips you can use to practice searching. We'll answer questions like:

- How can I search safely online?
- How can I tell if a **website** or online news is real?
- Where can I find information from **reliable sources**?



The **internet** is a network that allows computers, smartphones, and tablets all over the world to share information.

Being **online** means you're connected to the internet. Finding information online means you're using the internet for your search.

A **website** is a group of pages on the internet. A website is often all about one topic or service.

Reliable sources provide information that you can trust. An expert or an article on a government website are two examples of reliable sources.

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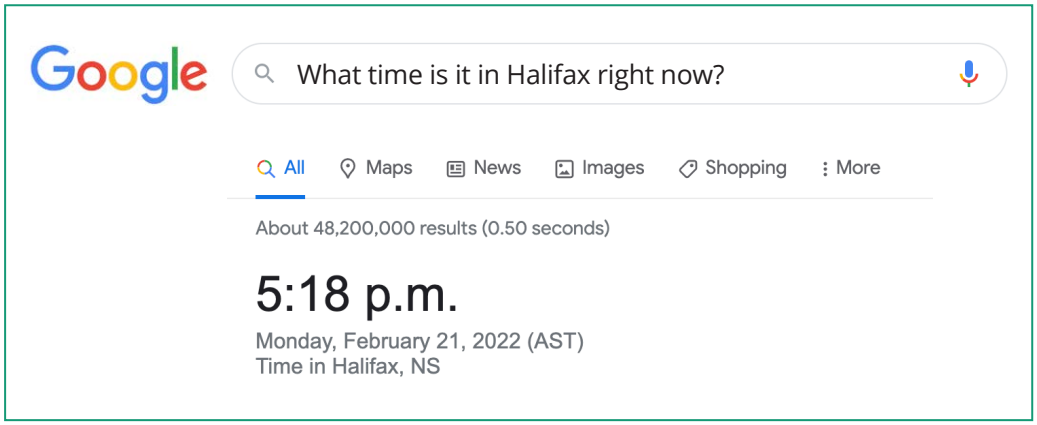
Getting started with online searches

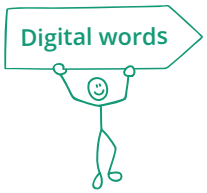
Searching for information online can be a quick and easy way to find answers to your questions. It can also be overwhelming. There are lots of answers online! **Search engines** like Google, Bing, or Yahoo can make it easier to find what you want.

When you use a search engine, you type a question or **keyword** into the **search box**.

Get there: www.google.ca



The search engine will search the whole internet for whatever you typed into the search box. Then it will show you a list of **search results**.



A **search engine** is a website that helps you find answers to your questions online. When you type a word or question into a search engine, it searches the whole internet for the information and shows you a list of results.

A **search box** is the text box in a search engine where you type your keywords or questions.

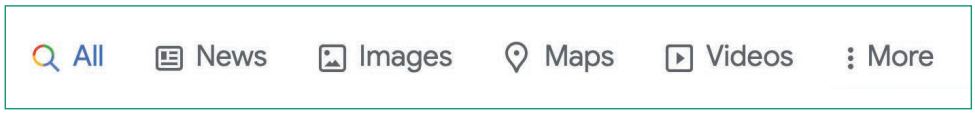
Search results are the answers a search engine finds to a question you ask. When you type a question or keyword into a search engine, it will give you a list of search results to choose from.

A **keyword** is a word or phrase that tells the search engine what you want to know.

Getting started with online searches

One way to find helpful results from an online search is to sort or filter the list of search results. Most search engines let you filter the list by clicking on tabs at the top of the page.

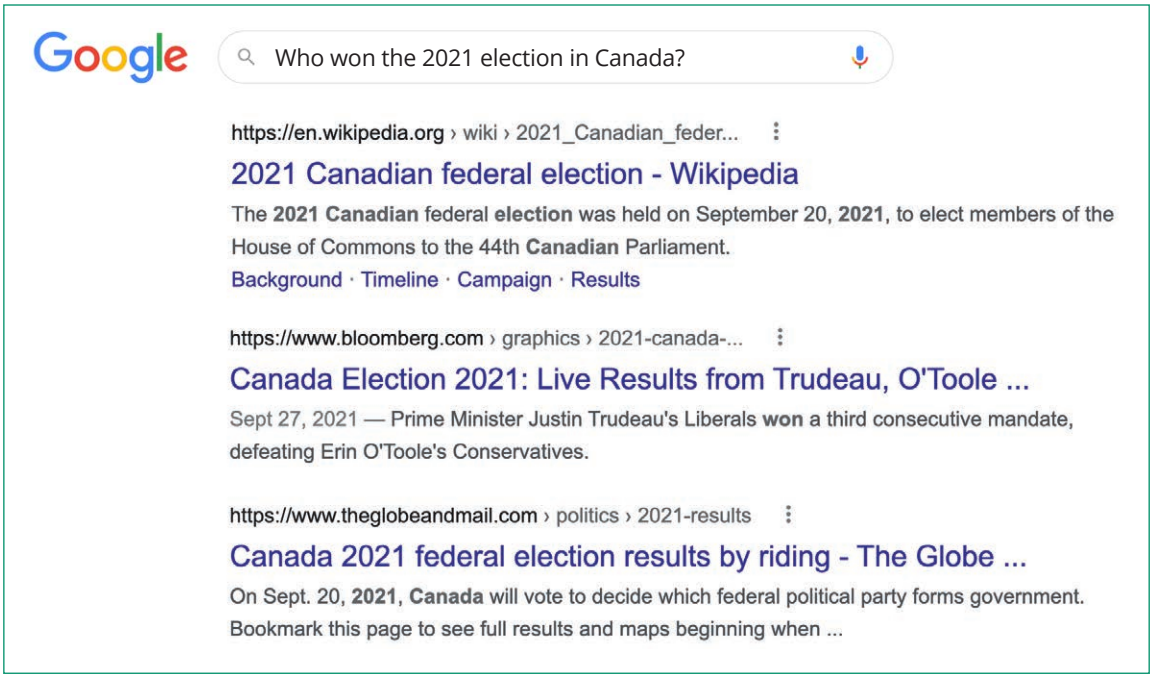
You can filter results by:



If your question is a simple one, the search engine will put an answer at the very top of the list. As you look through the list of search results, keep an eye out for the keywords or phrase you searched for in text that's bolded.

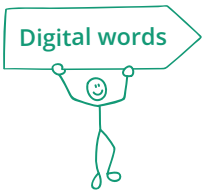
Try it

Here's a list of search results. Do you recognize the names of any of these websites? Can you find the answer to your question in the descriptions here? Which search result would you click on first? Why?



Avoiding fake news

The internet is full of information. But not everything you read online is true. On the internet, anyone can say what they want. It's not always easy to tell if something we read or hear online is true, false, or a joke. **Fake news** stories can spread quickly and create a lot of confusion about what's actually going on in the world.



Fake news is untrue information that some people think is true. It often looks like real news stories. It can start from a joke or a person who doesn't know all of the facts, and end up being shared with a lot of people.

Meet Manuel

Manuel spends a lot of time online. One morning, Manuel reads about an awful earthquake in British Columbia on a news site he doesn't know. He posts about the earthquake on Facebook. Later that day, Manuel's cousin calls him. He's upset because he read Manuel's post about the earthquake and called his friends who live in British Columbia to see if they were ok. But they told him there was no earthquake. The story Manuel posted was fake! Manuel is embarrassed and feels terrible that he made his cousin worry.

Think about it

- What do you think Manuel could have done differently?
- Do you think you'd recognize fake news if you saw it? Do you think most people would?
- Have you ever shared a story without knowing if was true or not? What happened?

Think before you share
We can all help stop the spread of fake news. It's especially important to pause and think before sharing when a story is big and just coming out. If you're not sure whether the story is real, it's always better to check that it's from a reliable source before you share it.

Sifting through fake websites

There are other kinds of information online that aren't reliable, like fake websites. Fake websites are common. Many of us shop online, but it can be tricky to tell if a website is real or if someone created it to steal our money and our information.

Here are some things to look out for when shopping online:

- Does the website look professional? Do all of the links work? Are all the words spelled correctly?
- Can you find contact information on the website, like an address and a phone number?
- Are the sales, return, and privacy policies clear and easy to find?
- Is it easy to navigate the website?
- Does the website ask for your credit card information only when you're ready to buy something?

If you answered "no" to one or more of these questions, the site could be fake and trying to steal your money or your information. To learn more about avoiding fake websites, visit https://cba.ca/article/online-shopping-scams-during-the-pandemic.

Finding reliable sources of information

One of the best ways to make sure what you're reading is true is to use reliable sources for your news and important information.

Here are some examples of reliable sources:

- National and local newspapers and their official websites, like The Globe and Mail, The Toronto Star, Financial Post, Montreal Gazette
- National and local radio and television news, like the CBC, Radio-Canada, CTV, Global News
- Official government or health authority websites like Canada.ca, Ontario.ca, Saskatchewan Health Authority, Alberta Health Services

Stories, information, and even whole websites can be fake. How can you check if the website or information is real or fake?

Here are steps you can take to check if a website is real:

- To make sure you're reading an organization's official website or social media profile, do an online search for them. Compare the top result to the site or profile you're on and see if it's the same.
- To check if a story is true, do an online search for other stories on the same topic. If other trusted news sites are writing about it, it's a popular story and is probably true.
- If the story is about health or science, check if the author is a real expert on the subject. Do an online search for their name to learn more about them and what they know about the subject.

Try it

Imagine that you like baking with yogurt. While searching for a new recipe online, you find an article called "Avoid using yogurt to bake in Canada." When you're reading the article, you learn this information:

- The story says that all major yogurt brands sold in Canada have been recalled because of potential bacteria contamination
- The story was written by an unknown food blogger and was published in 2017
- When you do an online search for other stories on the same topic, you don't find anything

Is this article a reliable source? Why or why not?

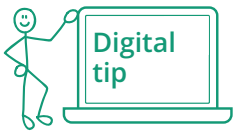
Congratulations!

You've completed the *Searching safely online* workbook.

You learned about:

- Searching safely online
- How to tell if a story or a website is real
- Where to find information from reliable sources

We hope you feel more confident using the internet, staying safe online, and searching for reliable information.



Want to learn more about using the internet safely? Check out our website for more lessons and resources to help you practice your digital literacy! Visit abcconnectforlearning.ca.