

## Instructions for Finding Information on SIRS Discoverer

*Do you need information on a topic you are researching? Are you looking for an interesting topic to learn about? Search no further! SIRS Discoverer is the place for you!*

There are two ways you can use this database to do research. **First**, if you don't have a particular topic in mind, you can click on a picture in the **"Browse Subject Tree"** box.



Let's say you want to study a famous person. Click on **"Notable People."**

This will take you to a page that lists ALL of the articles on famous people. On the right side you will see a blue box which will help you narrow down your topic.

Sort by: [ [Title](#) | [Publication](#) | [Lexile](#) | [Date](#) ] ▲ ▼ Details: [ [Show](#) | [Hide](#) ]

- NEWS** [Reunited Nation Loses Its Leader](#) 📰 📱 📺  
*Washington Post*; Apr 8, 2015; Lexile Score: 740; 4K.  
**Summary:** "Northerners whooped it up when they heard that Confederate General Robert E. Lee had surrendered. The Civil War was all but over! The North had won! Five days later, President Lincoln and his wife, Mary Todd Lincoln, decided to see a play at Ford's Theatre, near the White House. The president was tired from the strain of leading the nation through four years of bloodshed. An evening out often lifted his spirits. So on the night of April 14, 1865--150 years ago next week--the Lincolns went to the theater." (*Washington Post*) Read more about the assassination of President Lincoln.  
**Descriptors:** [U.S. History](#), [Civil War \(1861-1865\)](#), [Booth, John Wilkes \(1838-1865\)](#), [Lincoln, Abraham \(1809-1865\)](#), [Assassination](#)
- MAG** [The Curious Case of "Typhoid Mary"](#) 📰 📱 📺  
*NewsCurrents Read to Know*; Apr 4, 2015; Lexile Score: 960; 6K.  
**Summary:** "This year marks the 100th anniversary of the final arrest of Mary Mallon — better known as 'Typhoid Mary.' Over time, this nickname came to mean someone who carries a disease without knowing it, and spreads it to others. Mary Mallon was an immigrant who unknowingly infected dozens of people with a disease called typhoid fever. Although this was an accident, her refusal to change her ways ended up causing more tragedy." (*NewsCurrents Read to Know*) Read more about "Typhoid Mary" and how she spread the disease.  
**Descriptors:** [Communicable diseases](#), [Transmission](#), [Quarantine](#), [Typhoid fever](#), [Mallon, Mary \(1870-1938\)](#)
- MAG** [The Tireless Creativity of Alfred Hitchcock](#) 📰 📱 📺  
*NewsCurrents Read to Know*; Apr 4, 2015; Lexile Score: 920; 5K.  
**Summary:** "Alfred Hitchcock is remembered for his famous silhouette, drawn with just a few simple lines. He is also remembered as one of the world's greatest movie directors." (*NewsCurrents Read to Know*) Read more about the life and successful career of Alfred Hitchcock.  
**Descriptors:** [Motion picture producers and directors](#), [Hitchcock, Alfred \(1899-1980\)](#), [Horror films](#), [Psycho \(Film\)](#), [Producers \(Film\)](#)
- MAG** [This Week in History: General Robert E. Lee Surrenders...](#) 📰 📱 📺  
*NewsCurrents Read to Know*; Apr 6, 2015; Lexile Score: 980; 5K.  
**Summary:** "This year marks the 150th anniversary of the end of the bloodiest conflict in U.S. history, the Civil War. The event that signaled the ending of this war was the final surrender of Robert E. Lee at Appomattox — *ap-poh-MATT-uhx* — Courthouse, Virginia, on April 9, 1865." (*NewsCurrents Read to Know*) Read more about Lee's surrender.

- Topics/subtopics:**
- > [Animal Workers](#)
  - > [Architects](#)
  - > [Astronauts, Aviators & Pilots](#)
  - > [Authors, Playwrights & Poets](#)
  - > [Chefs](#)
  - > [Craftspeople](#)
  - > [Criminals](#)
  - > [Dancers](#)
  - > [Designers](#)
  - > [Directors & Filmmakers](#)
  - > [Educators](#)
  - > [Entertainers](#)
  - > [Entrepreneurs](#)
  - > [Environmentalists](#)
  - > [Everyday Heroes](#)
  - > [Explorers](#)
  - > [Firefighters & Police Officers](#)
  - > [Health Care Providers](#)
  - > [Historical Figures](#)
  - > [Human Rights Activists](#)
  - > [Inventors](#)
  - > [Journalists](#)
  - > [Judges & Lawyers](#)
  - > [Kids](#)
  - > [Military Personnel](#)
  - > [Movie, Radio & Television Stars](#)
  - > [Musicians, Singers & Conductors](#)
  - > [Painters, Illustrators &](#)

I clicked on "Explorers" to narrow the topic, and it took me to all of the articles available on a wide variety of explorers.

After you narrow down your topic, you'll want to look at the tabs on the top of the page.

You can narrow your choices to Newspaper articles, Magazine articles, Reference books, Graphics, and even other Websites!



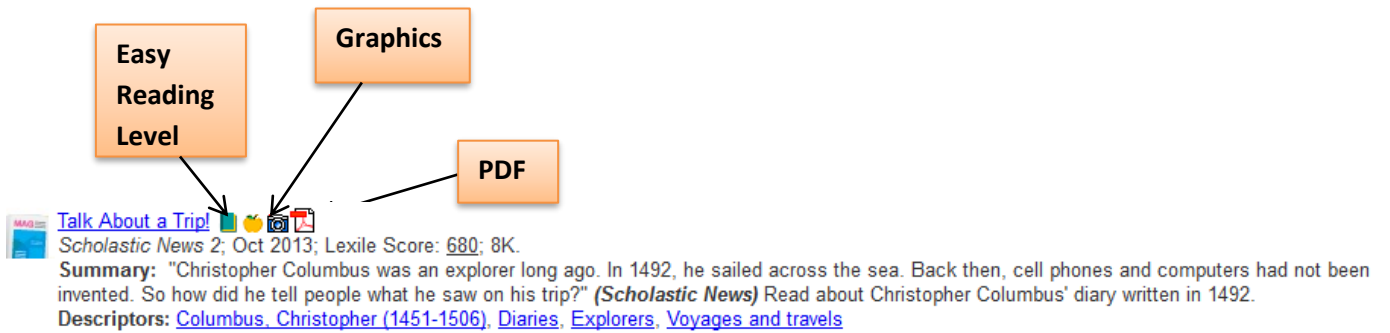
The screenshot shows a search results interface. At the top right, there is a 'home page' link and a search icon. Below this is a row of resource tabs: 'All Articles' (315), 'Newspapers' (36), 'Magazines' (121), 'Reference' (110), 'Graphics' (353), and 'WebFind Sites' (25). An arrow points from the text box above to the 'WebFind Sites' tab. Below the tabs is a navigation bar with 'HOME < NOTABLE PEOPLE < Explorers' and 'Reading Levels / Source & Summary' with color-coded options: General (purple), Easy (green), Moderate (blue), and Challenging (red). Further right are icons for 'Subjects', 'Graphics', 'Activities', 'Fiction', 'People', and 'PDF'. Below the navigation bar is a sorting section: 'Sort by: [ Title | Publication | Lexile | Date ] ▲ ▼ Details: [ Show | Hide ]'. The first search result is 'A Million Lies?' by Appleseeds, dated Feb 2015, with a Lexile Score of 880 and 3K views. The summary reads: 'At the end of his life, Marco Polo was known by some as 'the man of a million lies.' This was because of a book that told incr

Before you choose your article, you should also look at the key, just below the resource tabs. You'll learn what the different color books mean, and the symbols they use to show an article has graphics or activities, or if it is available in PDF.



This screenshot is identical to the one above, but with a yellow rectangular box highlighting the navigation bar area. An arrow points from the text above to the 'PDF' icon in the navigation bar.

So, as you can see by the newspaper article below, it is an easy reading level, has graphics in it, and can be downloaded as a PDF file.



The image shows a screenshot of a Scholastic News article titled "Talk About a Trip!". Three orange callout boxes with arrows point to specific features: "Easy Reading Level" points to the Lexile score (680; 8K), "Graphics" points to the article's title and summary, and "PDF" points to a PDF icon in the article's header. The article text includes a summary and descriptors.

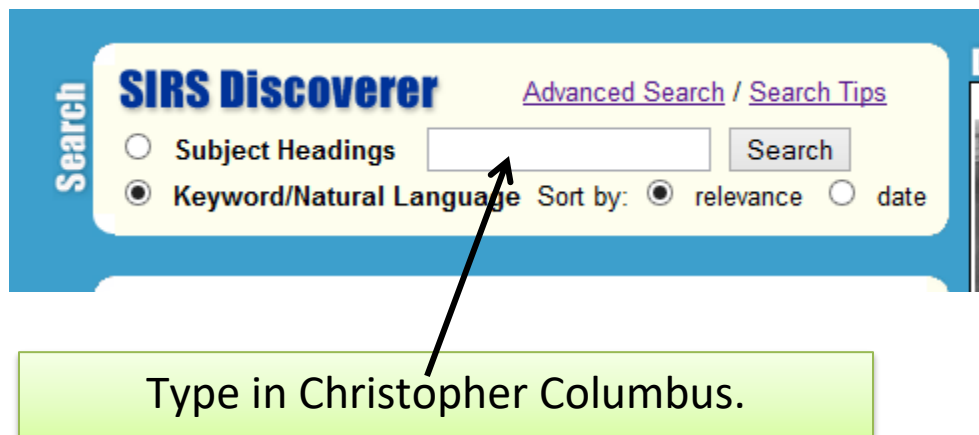
**Easy Reading Level**

**Graphics**

**PDF**

[Talk About a Trip!](#)  
Scholastic News 2; Oct 2013; Lexile Score: 680; 8K.  
**Summary:** "Christopher Columbus was an explorer long ago. In 1492, he sailed across the sea. Back then, cell phones and computers had not been invented. So how did he tell people what he saw on his trip?" (*Scholastic News*) Read about Christopher Columbus' diary written in 1492.  
**Descriptors:** [Columbus, Christopher \(1451-1506\)](#), [Diaries](#), [Explorers](#), [Voyages and travels](#)

What if you want to find an article on a specific explorer like Christopher Columbus? The second way to get articles is to enter your terms in the search box on the home page.



The image shows the SIRS Discoverer search interface. A search box is highlighted with a callout box that says "Type in Christopher Columbus." The interface includes a search bar, a "Search" button, and options for "Subject Headings" and "Keyword/Natural Language". The "Sort by" options are "relevance" (selected) and "date".

**Search** **SIRS Discoverer** [Advanced Search](#) / [Search Tips](#)

Subject Headings

Keyword/Natural Language Sort by:  relevance  date

Type in Christopher Columbus.

You get 411 results! Let's sort by Lexile so that the lowest (easiest) articles on top.

Click on the up arrow next to Lexile.

411 All Articles 38 Newspapers 143 Magazines 172 Reference 12 Graphics 7 WebFind Sites

christopher columbus Search More Search Options Below

Reading Levels / Source & Summary General Easy Moderate Challenging Subjects Graphics Activities Fiction People P

Sort by: [ Relevance | Date | Lexile ▲ ▼ ] Details: [ Show | Hide ]

**Christopher Columbus** Lexile Score: 780; 21K.  
Summary: "Christopher Columbus was born in Genoa, Italy." (Biography for Beginners--World Explorers) He opened European exploration and colonization. Learn more about Columbus's life, his discoveries and his family. Resources for n  
Descriptors: Columbus, Christopher (1451-1506), Discoveries in geography, Explorers, Italian, Nonfiction books, Nonficti

**Columbus, Christopher** Lexile Score: 960; 14K.  
Compton's by Britannica; Aug 1, 2011; Lexile Score: 960; 14K.

**Americas\_early exploration of the** Lexile Score: 1040; 113K.  
Compton's by Britannica; Aug 1, 2011; Lexile Score: 1040; 113K.

**This Week in History: Christopher Columbus** Lexile Score: 1050; 9K.  
NewsCurrents Read to Know; Oct 8, 2012; Lexile Score: 1050; 9K.  
Summary: "On the second Monday of October every year, the United States observes Columbus Day....This holiday ce

Now you have articles that start in the 300 range.

Sort by: [ Relevance | Date | Lexile ▲ ▼ ] Details: [ Show | Hide ]

**A Message from the Past** Lexile Score: 340; 2K.  
Scholastic News 1; Oct 2013; Lexile Score: 340; 2K.  
Summary: Read about Christopher Columbus. Activities are included.  
Descriptors: Columbus, Christopher (1451-1506), Diaries, Explorers, Voyages and travels, Early learning activities

**Searching for the Santa Maria** Lexile Score: 440; 2K.  
Scholastic News 1; Oct 2014; Lexile Score: 440; 2K.  
Summary: Read about the search for a shipwreck. Activities are included.  
Descriptors: Columbus, Christopher (1451-1506), Ships, Shipwrecks, Underwater archaeology, Early learning activities

**FACTS ABOUT NATIONS** Lexile Score: 490; 91K.  
The World Almanac for Kids 2004; 2004; Lexile Score: 490; 91K.

**Facts About Nations: D-K** Lexile Score: 530; 28K.  
The World Almanac for Kids 2013; 2013; Lexile Score: 530; 28K.

**Voice in the Wind** Lexile Score: 540; 19K.  
Read; May 5, 2000; Lexile Score: 540; 19K.  
Summary: "LA LLORONA, the best-known of all Hispanic folktales, has many versions." (READ) A dramatization of LA LLORONA, which means "the weeping woman," is presented.  
Descriptors: Children's plays, Folklore, Latin America

**Suriname** Lexile Score: 550; 14K.  
SIRS Discoverer: Country Facts; 2014; Lexile Score: 550; 14K.  
Summary: Facts about Suriname are presented.  
Descriptors: Suriname

Click on an article that looks interesting and start learning!

## Screencast of Britannica School Elementary Edition

Promotion:

I would promote this screencast in several ways. First, I would upload the links to it in several different places. A link could go on the Media Center homepage, the school's Facebook page, the staff drive, and my Symbaloo page. Since this is a database students can access from home, the link could also be tweeted to the community.

I would ask to present it at a staff meeting so that I could share it with teachers first. It might be that many of them have never used it either, and showing them can help them see what a great resource Britannica School could be in their classroom. I would encourage teachers to use the database and put a link to the instructions on their own webpages or class folders.

Another way to promote this screencast is to use it in a center during students' library time. While other small group activities are going on, students can take turns spending time watching the screencast and then exploring the database on their own.

<http://screencast-o-matic.com/watch/cofXqReRoN>

Christine Carey

Professor Margaret Gaudino

SLM 505

## Databases Bibliography

### Britannica Image Quest

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*Britannica Image Quest*. Encyclopaedia Britannica. 2015. Web. 1 Apr. 2015.

<http://quest.eb.com/>

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Grades	Features	Curriculum Connections
PreK-12	photos, maps, drawings, graphs, project ideas, featured collections	everything

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#### Strengths

Easy to navigate, millions of graphics

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#### Weaknesses

No advanced search capabilities

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#### Rating:



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#### Annotation:

This database has millions of rights cleared images for students to use. The images on this site can be used in reports, projects, lesson plans, school websites and newsletters. Students can browse albums like “Space Exploration”, “Money”, and “World Cup Fever.” They can also type in a search for what they need. Results can be sorted by collection and by shape. The size of the images can be increased or decreased for easier viewing and sorting. Each image comes with a brief explanation as well as options to download, email, and print.

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#### Professional Review: Most Highly Recommended

*Wilson’s Nonbook Materials Core Collection*. EBSCO Industries, 2015. Web. 1 April 2015.

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### Britannica Online School Edition

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*Britannica Online School Edition*. Encyclopaedia Britannica. 2015. Web. 1 Apr. 2015.

<http://school.eb.com/levels>

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Grades	Features	Curriculum Connections
PreK-12		everything

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photos, videos, media, world atlas, games, reading level, linked to state curriculum standards, educator page

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**Strengths**

Regularly updated, visually appealing, easy navigation

**Weaknesses**

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**Rating:**

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**Annotation:**

This database is chock full of information made easily accessible and kid-friendly. Students can click on categories or do searches. They can narrow down the results according to reading level, and can choose results in articles, videos, magazines, and websites. The font size can be increased or decreased easily and the results can be emailed. There is an educator page with lesson plans and a place where teachers can collect content.

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**Professional Review: Most Highly Recommended**

*Wilson's Nonbook Materials Core Collection*. EBSCO Industries, 2015. Web. 1 April 2015.

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### Culture Grams

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*Culture Grams*. ProQuest LLC. 2015. Web. 7 Apr. 2015. <http://online.culturegrams.com/>

**Grades**

2-12

**Features**

photos, videos, data tables, recipes

**Curriculum Connections**

country studies

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**Strengths**

Very user-friendly, very well-organized, and visually appealing

**Weaknesses**

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**Rating:**

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**Annotation:**

This database is the perfect place for students to find in depth, well-organized information on many countries around the world. Students can find a country by selecting it from a drop-down menu or clicking on a world map. The information for each country is organized into categories such as "Lifestyle", "History", and "Society". Students can have the information

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read to them or convert it into a PDF. Each country also has photos, videos, flags, symbols, and detailed maps.

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**Professional Review: Most Highly Recommended**

*Wilson's Nonbook Materials Core Collection*. EBSCO Industries, 2015. Web. 7 April 2015.

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**Gale Virtual Reference Library**

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*Gale Virtual Reference Library*. Gale Cengage Learning. 2015. Web. 7 Apr. 2015.

<http://go.galegroup.com/ps/dispatchBasicSearch.do?prodId=GVRL&userGroupName=fcpismvms>

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<b>Grades</b>	<b>Features</b>	<b>Curriculum Connections</b>
6-12	eBooks, advanced search, bookmarks, help, dictionary, highlights and notes	arts, business, environment, medicine, religion, science, technology, history

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**Strengths**

Excellent eBook resources, user-friendly, easy search features

**Weaknesses**

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**Rating:**



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**Annotation:**

*Gale Virtual Reference Library* has many excellent reference publications on this site to aid students in their research. There are a wide range of encyclopedias including *Encyclopedia of the World*, *Space Exploration Reference Library*, and *Encyclopedia of Public Health*. There are also book series including *DK Eyewitness* and *Hot Topics*. Students can search by keyword, subject or entire document. As they find articles that meet their needs, they can bookmark them and come back to them later. All articles can be turned into PDF files and printed. Books have a table of contents, list of illustrations, and indexes. There is a search option within each book so students can be taken to the exact section they need.

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**Professional Review: Most Highly Recommended**

*Wilson's Nonbook Materials Core Collection*. EBSCO Industries, 2015. Web. 1 April 2015.

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**History Reference Center**

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*History Reference Center*. EBSCO Industries. 2015. Web. 9 Apr. 2015.

<http://go.galegroup.com/ps/dispatchBasicSearch.do?prodId=GVRL&userGroupName=fcpismvms>

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<b>Grades</b>	<b>Features</b>	<b>Curriculum Connections</b>
6-12	book sources, advanced search, primary source documents, videos, graphics	US and World history

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<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
A great selection of primary sources and books, easy to navigate, well-organized	Not visually engaging

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**Rating:**



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**Annotation:**

*History Reference Center* has hundreds of books from which it draws its resources. Many of the encyclopedias and books that are available in this database can be found on the shelf of any public library. There are tens of thousands of primary source documents as well. The home screen is one big search box, where students can tailor the terms of their search using Boolean or SmartText Searches, as well as time period, type of publication and Lexile Reading Level. All of the articles can be viewed as PDF. Students can choose to listen to the article and download it as an mp3 file. Highlighting a word brings up the “listen option” and right clicking on the word offers students a choice to search for it on Google.

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**Professional Review: Most Highly Recommended**

*Wilson’s Nonbook Materials Core Collection*. EBSCO Industries, 2015. Web. 1 April 2015.

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**Mackin VIA**

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*Mackin VIA*. Mackin VIA. 2015. Web. 7 Apr. 2015. <http://www.mackinvia.com/Titles?rpp=18>

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<b>Grades</b>	<b>Features</b>	<b>Curriculum Connections</b>
PreK-12	eBooks, text-to-speech	fiction and nonfiction

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<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
Well-organized, easy to navigate	books can’t be downloaded for offline use, no mobile app

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**Rating:**

Access is a bit limited by lack of mobile app and no download capabilities. Plus, there are no reading levels available.

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**Annotation:**

Mackin VIA is a collection of ebooks for students of all ages. There are nonfiction as well as fiction choices taken from more than 40 databases. Students can search for books by author, subject, topic, series, number of pages, date published, language, and available features.

Students can see how many pages and what interest grade level the book is before opening it.

All content is licensed for unlimited simultaneous use. Librarians can create “Groups” which are collections of preselected books for specific students.

**Professional Review: Most Highly Recommended**

*Wilson’s Nonbook Materials Core Collection*. EBSCO Industries, 2015. Web. 1 April 2015.

**Marshall Cavendish Digital**

*Marshall Cavendish Digital*. Marshall Cavendish Corporation. 2015. Web. 7 Apr. 2015.  
<http://www.marshallcavendishdigital.com/mcdigitalhome>

<b>Grades</b>	<b>Features</b>	<b>Curriculum Connections</b>
PreK-12	photos, videos, media, eBooks, dictionary, glossary, guided tour	biology, history, geography, health, science, literature

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
Well-organized, easy to navigate, font size is adjustable	No reading levels, some articles don’t have pictures or illustrations, no read aloud feature

**Rating:**

👍👍👍👍 Missing some important features like reading levels, illustrations on some articles and a read aloud feature for students with learning disabilities.

**Annotation:**

*Marshall Cavendish Digital* is a database of informative articles and also features hundreds of eBooks for all ages. While the articles are mainly geared to middle school and up, there are many picture books in the eBook collection for younger students to read. There are several different ways to find information. Students can enter a “Quick Search”, search using “Advanced Search”, “Browse by Category”, or “Browse by Title.” The results are ranked based on relevancy to help students find the content most suited to their search. Once in an

article, students can make use of many features including a highlighting tool, a dictionary, and a note taking tool.

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**Professional Review: Most Highly Recommended**

*Wilson's Nonbook Materials Core Collection.* EBSCO Industries, 2015. Web. 1 April 2015.

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**PebbleGo**

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*PebbleGo.* Capstone Press. 2015. Web. 1 Apr. 2015.

[http://www.pebblego.com/choose/choose\\_product.html](http://www.pebblego.com/choose/choose_product.html)

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<b>Grades</b>	<b>Features</b>	<b>Curriculum Connections</b>
K-2	photos, videos, sounds, dictionary, games	animals, science, people, social studies

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**Strengths**

Regularly updated, tons of things that interest young students, super-easy navigation

**Weaknesses**

**Rating:**



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**Annotation:**

This very kid-friendly database makes research accessible to the youngest students. Every part of the site has an audio feature. The topics are spoken to them when they hover over the pictures. Once they narrow down their topic through the voice guidance, they are taken to an article which they can have read to them as well. They can also click on the highlighted words to see and hear their definitions. There is a wide range of topics from animals to earth science. There are biographies of famous people, and explanations of things like weather, U.S. government, and jobs in the community.

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**Professional Review: Most Highly Recommended**

*Wilson's Nonbook Materials Core Collection.* EBSCO Industries, 2015. Web. 1 April 2015.

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**Science Reference Center**

*Science Reference Center*. EBSCO Industries, Inc. 2015. Web. 5 Apr. 2015.  
<http://web.b.ebscohost.com/scirc/search/advanced?sid=36e92442-b81d-4eac-b731-7a738e886d78%40sessionmgr115&vid=16&hid=101>

<b>Grades</b>	<b>Features</b>	<b>Curriculum Connections</b>
6-12	full text science articles, Lexile level, Visual Search, lesson plans	earth and space science, physical science, life science

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
Full-text articles on a wide variety of science topics	Basic design, not visually appealing, some sources are old

**Rating:**  
 👍👍👍👍 Very basic design and lacks visual appeal.

**Annotation:**  
 This database has full text articles devoted to the subject of science. It has a very basic design, but is fairly easy to navigate. The search process is highly customizable allowing for several different search modes including, Boolean/Phrase, Find all my search terms, Find any of my search terms, and SmartText searching which allows the student to copy and paste large chunks of text to search for results. Students can also limit their results by benchmark, document type, number of pages, date of publication, publication type, and Lexile Reading Level. There are articles available at lower reading levels, but this database would mostly be useful for high school students looking for informative articles to support scholarly research.

**Professional Review: Most Highly Recommended**  
*Wilson's Nonbook Materials Core Collection*. EBSCO Industries, 2015. Web. 1 April 2015.

### SIRS Discoverer

*SIRS Discoverer*. ProQuest LLC. 2015. Web. 31 Mar. 2015.  
<http://ars.sirs.com/discoverer.html>

<b>Grades</b>	<b>Features</b>	<b>Curriculum Connections</b>
1-12	Ithink skills tutor, advanced search options, current events, world almanac, encyclopedia, Lexile levels, Common Core correlations	everything

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>

Regularly updated, tons of articles, searching is easy

The results page is a bit crowded and not well-designed

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**Rating:**

👍👍👍👍 Students might have a hard time sorting through the crowded results page.

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**Annotation:**

This database has a plethora of full-text articles that can be found using keywords and subject headings. There is also an advanced search with options for Boolean operators, truncations, phrases and natural language. Younger students can click on a picture that interests them and find its related resources. Once a student enters a search, the results can be narrowed by type and can be sorted by Lexile number. The home page is well-organized and visually appealing, but once you get your results, the pages become very text-heavy and crowded.

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**Professional Review: Core Collection**

*Wilson's Nonbook Materials Core Collection*. EBSCO Industries, 2015. Web. 1 April 2015.

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**Selection Criteria** (adapted from *MDK12 Digital Library: Criteria for Online Databases and Digital Content*):

- 👍 The site is appropriate and accessible for the intended audience.
- 👍 The scope is sufficient and the information is accurate.
- 👍 The design and presentation are pleasing and well organized.
- 👍 It is easy to navigate
- 👍 The search input and output methods are user friendly.

**Rating Explanation:**

Each of the above criteria equals one point. If a database has all of the above criteria, it is rated as a five and has five “thumbs up”. If the website is missing any of the above criteria, it loses a point for each one. In the case of a rating that is less than five thumbs up, an explanation is given.

## Works Cited

Curtis, Della. "MDK12 Digital Library: Criteria for Online Databases and Digital Content." 31 March 2014. Web. 7 Apr. 2015.