

Pascack Valley Regional High School District
Digital Citizenship
Information Literacy

What is Information Literacy?

Literacy, in the traditional sense, typically refers to a person's ability to read and comprehend written material. However, with the information explosion over the last 20 years, a new type of literacy has emerged - Information Literacy.

According to the [Association of College and Research Libraries](#)(ACRL), information literacy is defined as "a set of abilities requiring individuals to 'recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information.'" Information literacy makes the assumption someone is already literate and adds a crucial layer of being able to find and use relevant information. While information literacy has always existed among scholars, in today's world, all people need these skills.

Why is Information Literacy important?

The word "Google" did not exist 30 years, yet today, it is one of the most widely used verbs in the world. While "Google" may do a fantastic job of finding information, only those with information literacy skills can truly find useful information, evaluate relevance and then use that information effectively.

Unfortunately, information literacy is often overlooked. Many think that if you can open a browser and type, you must be information literate; however, that is like saying that if you know to press on the accelerator to go and brake to stop you are a good driver. Information literacy skills must be honed through experience and purposeful tasks.

What can we do to help students?

Here is a short list of examples educators may use to promote Information Literacy:

- Give students a topic and have them find one online resource they feel best addresses that topic. Have students put URL into a class Google Doc. As a class, view each URL and discuss relevance/validity of sources
- When starting a project, take time to give examples of good sources, and more importantly, how these resources may be found
- A Google search is only as good as the parameters entered. Before that next research project, take 5 minutes to demonstrate the best ways to search
- Discussion: "How do you know an online source is good?"

Where can I learn more?

- [Association of College Research and Libraries](#)
- [Commonsense Media](#) - click on "Information Literacy"
- [November Learning](#) - Resources for Educators
- [Edutopia](#) - Resources for Parents
- [Tips and Tricks for Google Searches](#)
- [Google Scholar](#) - Search for published articles