Making the most of digital resources

Maximising their value (and your impact)

With special thanks to Graham Gardner and Terri McCargar for sharing so many of their ideas included here

Joyce Martin, Managing Director, JCS Online Resources
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“Online resources don’t jump out at students and staff and scream “use me” any more than your library books jump off the shelves!

Digital resources also need to be promoted and displayed.”

From Doug Johnson’s blog: 7 ways to promote your library’s online resources
Some (obvious) essentials

A welcoming attractive and user-friendly library website/intranet
Upper School resources

Subject guides

These subject guides are to help you find resources for prep, coursework, exam preparation and independent research.

If you've got suggestions for improvements, please speak to Dr Gardner.
More ideas...

In person:
- Recommend e-resources over print books when students ask for help with their research
- One-to-one sessions with students
- One-to-one sessions with staff - maybe on inset days
- At staff/departmental meetings

Electronic
- Email relevant links to teachers
- Feature an e-resource in school newsletter
- Tweet
- Links on VLE/Intranet home page and subject pages
Support and promotional materials available from most of our publishers
And on the JCS product pages

Explore the Drama Online Learning Resources.

Find posters, flyers, email templates, web banners, and other promotional and library resources here.

Download specific promotional materials for individual collections below, zip files contain PDF posters and flyers, and JPG images for use on social media and in emails:

- BBC Drama Films and Documentaries (zip file)
- Classic Spring Oscar Wilde Collection (zip file)
- Playtext Collection (zip file)
- The Donmar Shakespeare Trilogy on Screen (zip file)
- The Hollow Crown (zip file)
- L.A. Theatre Works (zip file)
- Maxine Peake as Hamlet (part of the Shakespeare/Early Modern Drama Video Collection) (zip file)
- National Theatre Collection (zip file)
Other promotional ideas from Terri’s workshop:

- Create an **online open appointment form** and share this in your email signature, to encourage students and teachers to schedule focus time with you.

- Engage students with digital resources in related library tasks, such as **testing links on platforms** where you share digital resource information.

- Use **Padlet** and **Wakelet** for sharing links to useful articles and research content within your digital resource library.

Building a strong digital resource library and an engaged school community is not a linear process – pace yourself and take it one step at a time.
And don’t forget to impress and raise awareness of your digital library to parents.

https://www.sjl.herts.sch.uk/955/jstor
The role of the library in the digital age

Modern day libraries reap benefits not only in the development of strong digital literacy but also in academic improvement.

Emily Stannard, Head Librarian
It’s not just about ‘promotion’ via newsletters and posters etc –

It’s also about **engagement with subject teachers** to maximise value and benefits of your digital resources
"The true role of a School Librarian is to serve as information intermediaries in their schools, guiding students & teachers to the appropriate resources they need.

Dr Graham Gardner, Librarian at Abingdon School"
Map out your priorities in advance

These priorities and any key dates associated with them are dependent on what your school's focus areas are (e.g., academic, citizenship, pastoral) and mapped out ahead of time, so you can fully prepare.

Graham Gardner
Identify what subject teachers want (not what you want from them)

Graham Gardner

Dear colleague,

Do you ever ask lower school classes to research something for prep? Do they struggle with the assignments? Are you happy with the quality of their results? Would you like them to be more critical of what they find when they go online?

If the answer to those questions is 'yes', then the library can (almost certainly) provide help:

- Library lessons. All lower school students spend one period every two weeks in the library, where they either read or learn research skills. I'd be more than happy using this time to support any research students have been asked to do.
- Tailored guidance. I already provide this for several subjects, spending 10 - 20 minutes at the start of a project outlining how to find, evaluate and use online resources effectively. You don't even have to spend time bringing students to the library - I can come to the classroom.
- Online resources. The library provides lower school students with access to Britannica School, which offers authoritative content aligned to the national curriculum and enables students to choose between three reading levels, along with more specialised resources covering science and current affairs.

If you want to take advantage of any of those offers in your planning for the next academic year, or have ideas of how the library could help in other ways, please let me know.

Best wishes,

Graham
Embrace the role of the information intermediary

Identify resources that are timely, relevant, and useful, curate these resources appropriately with guidance and context, then promote through your school's digital platforms, at school assemblies and staff meetings, classroom demonstrations, or through student/teacher one to one meetings.

Graham Gardner
Look at resources through the lens of Assessment Objectives...

(engaging with students about resources where & when it really matters...)
“Why should I spend time engaging with this page?”

**Topic-based essay**

**Overview**

The exam board specifies that your topic-based essay should draw on "a range of primary and secondary material", which you need to gather through "independent study and research".

It adds: "A range is considered to be 10 to 15 in total; however, where appropriate learners may use more.

This guide will help you find sources and reference (cite) them using footnotes and a bibliography.

**Research strategy**

To save time and make your search for reading as effective as possible, you need to identify what sort of reading material you're looking for - before you start looking for it.

**Finding secondary sources**

The best places to start looking for secondary sources, other than the History department library, include libraries, History Today online, Very Short Introductions online, Massolit and JSTOR.

**Finding primary sources**

The best places to start looking for primary sources include secondary sources, documentary sourcebooks, specialist collections and the wider internet.

**Referencing**

To ensure you get maximum credit for the sources you've drawn on in your essay, you need to create online citations and a bibliography using a consistent style.

**Exploring history**

Exploring history offers resources that might help you with other components of A level history, finding reading for your personal statement or exploring your own interests.
“Ah – it’s related to what the exam board requires from me for the topic-based essay, which is worth 20% of my final mark. I’d better read on.”
“Oh yikes! 10 to 15 sources? Really? How on earth am I going to come up with that many?”
“Okay, so this resource is promising it will help me find sources. I really hope it does, because I really need help! Oh, and it’s also talking about footnotes. Not sure what they are, but I think the teacher mentioned them at some point. Great. I might not be doomed to fail History after all.”
Useful links for further reading:

“Empowering Learning through Effective Use of eResources: Latymer Upper School”, Terri McCargar, Latymer Upper School

Making the most of digital resources, video of Graham Gardner’s workshop keynote

The role of the library in the digital age, Emily Stannard, Head Librarian, Bradfield College

“Making the most of digital resources – what we’ve learned so far.” JCS Blog