SIRS Discoverer Quick Start Guide

SIRS Discoverer (resources) is a general reference database for beginning learners and reluctant readers containing carefully selected, 100% full-text articles and images from more than 2,100 domestic and international newspapers, magazines, and government documents, along with 9,000+ educational weblinks via the integrated Discoverer WebFind content set.

Part 1: Navigating the Interface

Standard and advanced search options include the ability to search for keywords and phrases or subject heading terms indexed for each article. A link to advanced search leads to focused search and filtering options.

Subject tree is a method to browse and drill down through 15 categories of topics and subtopics in a hierarchy.

WebFind database is a separate database to search and browse the collection of reliable and credible Websites. Websites are fully integrated with articles and also appear in Discoverer search results.
Reference content

- **Current Events** features articles selected daily to encourage research and awareness of current news.
- **Spotlight of the Month** showcases currency and editorially-created and compiled content through monthly features, daily events and news.
- **World Almanac for Kids** provides facts and information on a variety of topics, including animals, the environment, history and the solar system.
- **Encyclopedia** features the full-text of Compton's by Britannica featuring articles and images covering science, math, history, cultures, ideas, the natural world, places, and people.

**Top pick** highlights articles and images, which are regularly selected by the SIRS Discoverer editorial team for their research value and interest.

Features

- **Science Fair Explorer** is a highly visual interactive that helps students identify an exciting science fair project topic, and quickly connect to age-appropriate project guides.
- **Skills Discoverer** quickly connects students to a variety of editorially-selected educational websites. Game-like activities and challenges engage users as they practice skills in curriculum-based subject areas.
- **Activities** provide a shortcut to all full-text articles that include an activity, such as editorial cartoons, debate, graphic organizers, craft projects, and writing activities.
- **Biographies** lead to a search and browse of over 2,000 biographies of famous and/or notable people, including every United States President.
- **Fiction** contains drama, folklore, plays, poetry, and other works of fiction.
- **Country Facts** provides reference information on nearly 200 countries, U.S. States and Canadian provinces.
- **Pictures** contain a search and browse for visuals such as maps, charts, and photographs.
- **Maps of the World** comprise over 300 detailed, colorful maps including the United States, Canada, Nations and Regions.
- **Educators’ Resources** compile a collection of materials designed to help educators and librarians use SIRS Discoverer.
- **Dictionary/Thesaurus** assists via search to define words, check spelling, and choose the perfect word.

Help topics

- **Tutorial** is a training video that provides an overview of features and content in SIRS Discoverer.
- **Help** launches a searchable help index.
- **How to Cite** details MLA, APA, and Turabian examples of how to cite articles, graphics and documents retrieved from SIRS Discoverer.
- **Workbooks** contain in-depth exercises that assist the user in the research process. An educator's guide and research strategies are also featured.
- **Tips** list search tips that may be printed for easy reference.
- **Bookmark** provides instructions for bookmarking and linking.
Part 2: Search Methods

Keyword/Natural Language Search
Keyword search is useful for an open search of preferred key words and phrases.

Subject Headings Search
Subject headings search is useful for locating specific research topics. This search utilizes a subject index to quickly locate articles related to that particular topic.

Auto Complete
Auto complete provides automatic suggested terms for keyword and subject headings searches.

Advanced Search
Advanced search is useful to focus the search on full text, title or author with the option of combining searches with Boolean operators. Sorts are available for relevance, date or Lexile and filtered by reading level, reference content and lexile range. Links to dictionary, thesaurus, the help menu, search tips and citation tips are provided for reference.

Search Tips
Search tips provide detailed instructions and examples of search strategies.
Part 3: Analyzing Your Results

Search results are numbered and return up to 1000 entries for each source type.

Source tabs further narrow search results to available newspapers, magazines, reference content, or WebFind websites.

Sort by provides options to sort by relevance, date or Lexile.

Details toggle between show and hide to reveal the full record including summary and descriptors (subject headings) or view only the title and source line information.

Reading Levels are color-coded and appear to the left of the title to indicate General (all grade levels), Easy (grades 1-4), Moderate (grades 5-7), or Challenging (8th grade and beyond).

Icons to the right of the title link to subject headings and as available, pictures and PDF files. Other icons indicate if an article is an activity, fiction or about a person.
Part 4: Working Within the Full-Text Document

The full-text article is accessed by clicking the article title. Users may email, print, or use the Share button to post a link to various social networking websites like Facebook and Twitter. Icons on the results list are repeated at the top of the article to indicate reading level and access to subjects, pictures, and PDF files. MLA citation is located at the bottom of each article.

Answering Oil Questions

Understanding the history of offshore drilling and the petroleum industry lends context to the Deepwater Horizon disaster

By Mark Washburn and Maria David

Oil and humanity have been linked since the dawn of civilization. In ancient times, oil that seeped to the surface of the Earth was collected and used to make ointments, medicines, building materials, adhesives and lamp fuel.

In modern times, oil has become a global, multi-billion dollar industry that serves as the primary energy source for most of the world. Its byproducts include plastics, fertilizers, asphalt, cosmetics and hundreds of other products. As the world continues to grapple with the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, a greater understanding of the history of oil and offshore drilling is in order. Here are a few questions and answers to help put the Deepwater Horizon disaster in context.

Q: Where does oil come from?

A: Oil began as tiny marine organisms about 50 million years ago, when dinosaurs walked the Earth.

As the organisms died, they lined the bottom of ancient seas and were gradually buried in silt. As sediment built up over millions of years, they were under tremendous pressure and heat, which turned them into a waxy substance called kerogen, rich in carbon and hydrogen. This migrated through porous rock over the ages and collected as deposits of oil and gas.

Land masses shifted, sealevels changed and the ancient seabeds wound up under dry land in places like Texas and the Middle East. Other oil beds formed deep beneath the seas.

Q: When was the start of the modern oil era?

Citation:

You can copy and paste this information into your own documents:

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