

Example activity 1: Google Trends

This activity is a short research task using *Google Trends* (www.google.com/trends/explore#cmpt=q).

The tool allows a comparison of the popularity of different search terms on the *Google* search engine, giving the results in the form of a line graph. A filter bar at the top allows the user to change the date, location, category and search type. Up to five search items can be compared at once.

Google Trends could be used as a supplementary resource for IELTS Writing Task 1 – describing graphs.

Here are the lesson plan notes for this activity.

Level:

Upper-intermediate

Time:

60 minutes

Focus:

Research skills; presenting information

Aims:

- to practise analysing and presenting information displayed in line graphs;
- to practise searching for specific information online using the basic functions of *Google Trends*.

Materials:

- a device to access the internet – at least one per pair of students;
- classroom computer/projector to present information and explain tasks;
- activity handout.

Anticipated problems:

- Ensure a strong internet connection, as the lesson is predominantly tech-based.
- The students can access *Google Trends* in their L1. Ensure they are using it in English!

Access *Google Trends* through www.google.co.uk/trends/explore#cmpt=q

or

- Type 'trends' into the *Google* search engine.
- Follow the first link: the *Google Trends* home page should appear.
- Add search terms where instructed.
- Use the filter bar above the search terms to filter your search by date, location, category (eg shopping) or search type.



- 1 Choose a topic you think will prompt discussion among your students. For my class aged 14–16, I normally choose celebrities or pop culture. Give the students a question to discuss in pairs, eg

Who was more popular in Google searches in the UK last year: Robert Pattinson or Daniel Radcliffe?

Elicit responses and discuss ideas as a class.

- 2 Explain that the students can find the answer using *Google Trends* (you might need to quickly concept check *trending*). Show them how to access *Trends*, using your computer/IWB. Use the 'search terms' boxes and filter bar to create a graph showing search trends for Robert Pattinson versus Daniel Radcliffe.

The students discuss whether their predictions were correct. The graph can be explored a little more – elicit why each search term may be more popular at certain times of the year (eg a new movie being released, gossip in the newspapers, etc).

- 3 Ask another question about popular culture, eg

Last week, were there more Google Image searches for a) Miley Cyrus b) Beyoncé or c) Paul McCartney?

After a brief discussion, have the students use their own devices to access *Google Trends* and find the answer. They may need direction in filtering the information, for example by date or chosen information (image searches only).

- 4 Give the students a practice activity to familiarise them with *Google Trends* as a research tool. You can instruct them to predict the answers first, to create more interest.

Example activity:

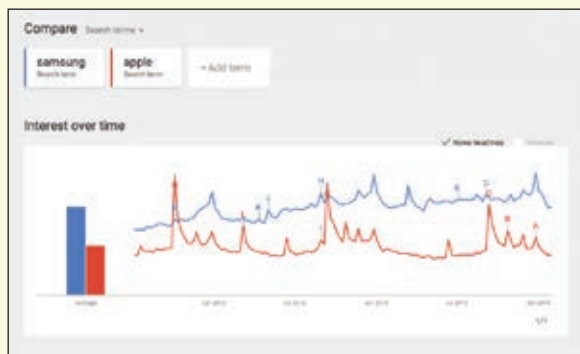
Predict the answers to these questions:

- 1 In 2013, what was a more popular search term: 'Gangnam Style' or 'Harlem Shake'?
- 2 What was the most searched for travel destination by UK internet users last year?
- 3 Who is more popular in *Google* searches right now: Gareth Bale or Cristian Bale?
- 4 What is more popular on *Google Shopping* now: 'shoes' or 'laptops'?
- 5 Was Wayne Rooney more popular in *Google* searches in 2010 or 2011?
- 6 Which is a more popular *Google* search term in England: 'Fish and chips' or 'Curry'?

Now use information on *Google Trends* to see if you're right!

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- 5** Use *Google Trends* to display a graph comparing Apple and Samsung since 2011 (it might be good idea to have this ready in a window at the start of the lesson). Example:



(Note: selecting 'News headlines' shows important stories relating to these search terms (marked A-I on the graph). You can find the content of the story by moving the cursor over each letter.)

Use this data to elicit/teach vocabulary for describing line graphs. You may want to make your own resource to introduce these words and phrases.

Example target language:

Introductory expressions	Language for graphs
The graph shows / indicates / depicts / illustrates ...	remain, unchanged, stable, constant, increase (-ed, -ed)
As can be seen from the graph ...	fall (fell, fallen), decrease (-ed, -ed), drop (dropped, dropped), slight (slightly), steady (steadily), gradual (gradually), gentle (gently), downward trend
As is shown / illustrated by the graph ...	

- 6** Put the students in pairs. They choose two or three search terms which they are interested in comparing. Make sure their choices are comparable: 'Arsenal' versus 'Manchester United' is probably worth comparing, but 'Bognor Regis Town FC' versus 'Liverpool' is unlikely to produce comparable data to analyse!

Get the students to compare these items using *Google Trends*. They can then prepare a brief presentation on the graph produced, using the target language where relevant/possible. When presenting their information, they can use the class computer to access the graph so that the other students have a point of reference.

Example activity 2: Google Art Project

This activity is a webquest, designed to be used with *Google Art Project* (www.google.com/culturalinstitute/home). The students can use a search bar at the top of the home page to find the answers to all the questions. *Art Project* is a great way to introduce learners to art as a subject, and to encourage independent research.

Art

Go to www.google.com/culturalinstitute/home and find the answers to these questions. You have 15 minutes!

Search for 'William Hogarth'. View all the items. Find 'Southwark Fair'.

- 1 What year was it painted?
- 2 Where is Southwark? (Hint: search in 'Details')
- 3 Find the man smoking. What colour is his jacket?
- 4 Which animal is a) hanging from a post? b) on a sign under the big red flag?

Find information on the National Gallery, London.

- 5 When did it move to Trafalgar Square?
- 6 How many paintings of Bacchus and Ariadne are on the National Gallery page?
- 7 Who were the artists?

Search for 'Banksy'.

- 8 What type of art does he create?
- 9 What is unusual about the title of his works?
- 10 In one of his images, what are the policemen doing?

Search for 'Damien Hirst'.

- 11 True or false? Damien Hirst spent six weeks creating a sculpture of a hairdryer and a ping-pong ball.

Search for 'Whistler's Mother'.

- 12 This is the nickname of a very famous painting. Who painted it and what is it actually called?
- 13 Where is the painting displayed?

Search for 'Vincent Van Gogh'.

- 14 Van Gogh painted a picture of his friend Paul Gauguin's chair. What can you see on the chair?
- 15 In his painting from 1885, how many people are around the table, and what are they doing?

Search for 'Queen Victoria'.

- 16 How old was she in her portrait by Denning?

Answers 1) 1733 2) London (south of the Thames) 3) blue (centre of the painting) 4 a) monkey, b) horse 5) 1831 6) two 7) Titian, Ricci 8) street art 9) They're all called 'Mural by Banksy'. 10) kissing 11) true 12) James Abbott McNeil Whistler, 'Portrait of the Artist's Mother' 13) the Musée D'Orsay in Paris 14) a candlestick and some books 15) five; eating potatoes 16) four years old