

2002

## Fifth Grade Website: Improving Learning Through the Use of the Web

Brent Thiessen  
*University of Northern Iowa*

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## Fifth Grade Website: Improving Learning Through the Use of the Web

### Abstract

The Internet has improved the way that information can be presented to students in an educational setting. Teachers have taken advantage of improving education through the Internet by creating their own websites. However, some of these websites are not created in a way that allows them to be used effectively by students. The author of this paper has created a website that will be used with his fifth grade students entitled The Fifth Grade Website (<http://homepage.mac.com/brthiessen>). The goal of the website is to enhance the educational experience of the students who use it. The website was designed in a way that would allow students to easily use it without any of the common errors that are found in many sites. Students can visit school related websites, practice math facts, and complete assignments simply by accessing the Fifth Grade Website. This website uses the power and resources of the Internet to create an educational website that can be used by students to enhance their learning experiences.

**Fifth Grade Website: Improving Learning Through the Use of the Web**

**A Graduate Project**

**Submitted to the**

**Division of Educational Technology**

**Department of Curriculum and Instruction**

**In Partial Fulfillment**

**Of the Requirements for the Degree**

**Master of Arts**

**University of Northern Iowa**

**By**

**Brent Thiessen**


**August 2002**

This Project by Brent Thiessen

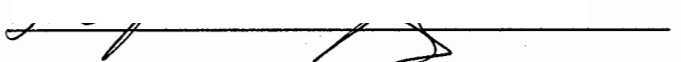
Titled: Fifth Grade Website: Improving Learning Through the Use of the Web

Has been approved as meeting the research requirement for the Degree of Masters of Arts.

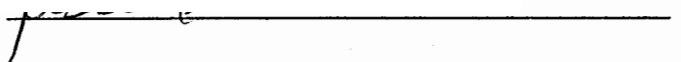
August 13, 2002  
Date Approved

Sharon E. Smaldino  
  
Graduate Faculty Reader

August 12, 2002  
Date Approved

Leigh E. Zeitz  
  
Graduate Faculty Reader

August 13, 2002  
Date Approved

Rick Traw  
  
Head, Department of Curriculum and Instruction

## Table of Contents

Abstract .....	Page iii
Introduction .....	Page 1
Review Of Literature .....	Page 4
Methodology .....	Page 5
The Project .....	Page 11
Conclusion .....	Page 16
References .....	Page 18
Appendix A .....	Page 19

## Abstract

The Internet has improved the way that information can be presented to students in an educational setting. Teachers have taken advantage of improving education through the Internet by creating their own websites. However, some of these websites are not created in a way that allows them to be used effectively by students. The author of this paper has created a website that will be used with his fifth grade students entitled The Fifth Grade Website (<http://homepage.mac.com/brthiessen>). The goal of the website is to enhance the educational experience of the students who use it. The website was designed in a way that would allow students to easily use it without any of the common errors that are found in many sites. Students can visit school related websites, practice math facts, and complete assignments simply by accessing the Fifth Grade Website. This website uses the power and resources of the Internet to create an educational website that can be used by students to enhance their learning experiences.

## Introduction

This project involves creating a website that will be used with a fifth grade class. The website will be created to enhance the learning experience of the fifth grade students. The subject matter that will be presented on the website will deal primarily with mathematics and social studies topics. The Fifth Grade Website will enhance and enrich the students' learning experience while also informing their parents of what is happening in the classroom. It will enhance and enrich the educational experience by providing a new way to communicate, incorporating distance learning technologies, allowing students to investigate information that is found on the Internet, and motivating students to learn.

An important part of the educational process is communication. Communication allows students and teachers to share their thoughts and opinions to enhance the learning experience for everyone. Students learn from one another by communicating with one another about things that they are experiencing in and out of the school setting. The Fifth Grade Website will allow students to communicate with teachers and with one another without having to be situated near the person. Communication on this website will occur through the use of e-mail and message boards. E-mail does not allow students to communicate instantly with others, but it does allow communication to take place quickly over a distance. Students can send e-mails to anyone throughout the entire world as long as those people also have e-mail access. The downside of using e-mail is that it does not allow for instant feedback to occur on messages. The sender will have to wait until the receiver has read and responded to the message before getting a reply. This means that there will be some delay in the communication process, but the benefits of being able to

communicate over great distances outweighs the time issue. The other method of communication that will be used within this website is a message board system. Message boards allow students to leave messages within the website that can be read by anyone who chooses to visit that site. This means that a student could post a question on the message board that could be answered by anyone visiting the website. The benefit of this is that the students will get a great deal of feedback from a variety of sources, but again time could become a negative factor. The student who posted the question has to wait until someone visits the website and posts a response which could be a long wait. Both message boards and e-mail have some downsides, but they will be valuable tools for the students to use throughout their use of the Fifth Grade Website.

The next thing that the Fifth Grade Website will bring to the students is the opportunity to use distance-learning technologies. Distance learning technologies incorporate strategies that allow the students to work with other students from distances that may be far away from them. Tools, such as e-mail and message boards, allow the students to communicate over great distances. Students also get the opportunity to work independently using the Internet to complete the necessary assignments and activities. The activities that are found on this website are developed to allow students to work independently. After introducing the activities, teachers can facilitate the learning process by helping students when they encounter problems. Allowing the students to work with the teacher as a facilitator is following the constructivist model, which states that students construct knowledge by working to solve real problems (Newby, Stepich, Lehman, and Russell, 2000). The students are given a framework that will guide them through the activities. However, in many of the activities included on this website the



students are able to choose what they would like to learn more about. This allows the learning to be determined by the students' interests while also making sure that they are within the objectives of the activities that are offered. Distance learning lets the students learn in a constructivist environment, which will help enhance their learning experiences.

Another thing that this website accomplishes is that students are able to investigate a great deal of information through the use of the Internet. The Internet is updated constantly with new information that can be accessed through the use of a computer. It is important to find a way to allow students to use the Internet because it does contain current information. The Fifth Grade Website gives students the opportunity to use the Internet and its vast resources. The activities that are included on the website direct students to use the Internet to find information about topics such as Iowa's geography, the NFL's attendance numbers, and rain forest statistics. The students will be given sites to visit so they are protected from those sites that do not have valid information or have content that is considered to be inappropriate. Allowing students to research the Internet without guidelines might result in them receiving too much information that they could not use. This website has been created in a way to allow students to successfully use the Internet to find information that they will need to complete their activities.

The final reason that this website was developed was to increase the motivation levels of the students towards education. The Fifth Grade Website will allow the students to access information about assignments, web pages to help them practice skills, and topics that are interesting to them. This website has been created to support the students' learning and interests. The students will be encouraged to send in suggestions for ways

to improve the website, as well as to send in links of pages that they find interesting. This will help to ensure that the students feel like they are a part of the website because their opinions matter. The interest level that the students have towards the website and its content will then increase due to their sense of ownership. This high interest level will be beneficial because the students will want to do their best on the activities that are presented on the website. Using a computer in school can motivate students to strive to do their best. Using the computers will motivate the students because they do not get to use them in a school setting very often. The goal of the Fifth Grade Website is not only to increase the students' motivation in school, but also to enhance the educational experience.

#### Review of Literature

The Fifth Grade Website will be used with students in an educational setting to accomplish many educational objectives. The website also had to be easy to use so students would be able to work independently on the activities that are included within the site. This website has been developed in a way that will allow all students to use it independently while also providing guidelines that will direct the students through the objectives. Using the information that was found in the articles allowed for the Fifth Grade Website to become a well-designed and easy to use educational website.

To make the Fifth Grade Website an effective and useful website the creator based its development on several articles dealing with proper web design. Maddux (1998) talks about common errors that are found in many websites that can currently be found on the Internet. The problems that are found in websites "constitute a considerable barrier to realizing the educational potential of the web" (Maddux, 1998, p. 28). Maddux

gives several suggestions on how to improve websites such as proofreading the information, revising the website often, and using common sense when deciding what to include on the website. If the website does not look good and is not useful to the creator then it will not look good or be useful to visitors.

Ingram (2000) discusses what steps need to be reached by the creators to make their websites look and work in a professional manner. "No one starts out knowing all there is to know, and we all must move through a series of steps or stages in order to develop expertise" (Ingram, 2000, p. 20). Ingram states that creators must reach the advanced level of web development to create an effective educational website. At this level the website begins to become more interactive which is needed in an educational setting. Creators at this level begin to use more complex web design techniques that incorporate instructional design steps. This means that more thought is put into the activities that are included within the website to allow them to better meet the needs of the students.

### Methodology

The Internet has grown immensely due to a significant increase in the number of web pages that have been added. The increase in the number of web pages that have been created has caused the Internet to become over-saturated. The quality of web pages has become very poor due to the fact that creators who do not have knowledge on how to create good quality sites develop them. Creators of websites do not learn the basics of web design because the Internet emerged very quickly starting in 1993 (Maddux, 1998). This quick growth did not allow time for proper web design standards to be established and put into general use. This led to a wide range of websites to be created because there

was not a clear set of developed standards in place. "Page design is the most basic dimension of expertise in web development (Ingram, 2000). With the quality of websites varying a great deal it is important that people learn how to evaluate the websites that they are visiting to ensure that they are of the best quality. There are five main things that must be considered to make sure that the Fifth Grade Website being created was of the best quality. A well-designed website needs to include an easy to use navigational system, up-to-date information, a clear purpose for its creation, information about the site and its creator, and it must be written correctly in terms of language and word use (Maddux, 1998).

The first thing that was considered when the Fifth Grade Website was created was the navigational system, or the way in which the users would get from one page to another. Maddux (1998) states that, "Every page should have a link back to the site's homepage" (p. 26). This will help to prevent the user from becoming lost while navigating through the website. It is also important to let the users easily navigate to the homepage because that page usually contains the information about who created the site and why it was created. Knowing information about the creator of the website will help the users determine if the information presented on the website is accurate and valid. The homepage is also a good place for users to visit because it shows them all of the other features that can be found within the website itself. From the homepage the users can find links that will let them navigate to the other areas of the website. It is important that the users can navigate through the website without being confused or finding themselves lost.

There has been great effort made to ensure that the Fifth Grade Website has a navigational system that is consistent and is easy to use. The users will be directed to the homepage of the website to ensure that they are able to have access to all of the features that are found on the site. There is a chance, however, that some of the users will find themselves starting on a page that is not the homepage. To make sure that they have a way to navigate back to the homepage, there is a link on each of the main topic pages that will lead the users back to the homepage. There is not a link on every page that allows users to go to the homepage because there is not a need for it. The Fifth Grade Website is divided into sections based on the different activities for the students. On each of these sections there is at least one link that will allow the users to return to the homepage. Each of the links that return users to the homepage was created in a similar way so they will be easily recognized when they are needed. Another feature that is found on this website to enhance its navigational system is that links that take the users to other websites outside of the pages related to this one open in new windows. This feature keeps the Fifth Grade Website open in another window so the users can return to it easily.

The second thing that is included in the Fifth Grade Website to make it a useful website is information that is up-to-date and current. It is frustrating to visit web pages that are out of date and do not have links that work properly. "This causes children great disappointment, and causes both students and teachers to conclude that the Web is just too difficult to use and does not justify the time and effort required" (Maddux, 1998, p. 27). The Internet is known for being a tool that can be used to access current information quickly. However, if links and information are not updated on a regular basis then the

website begins to lose some of its effectiveness. It is important to check all links and information that are available on a website to ensure that all of its features work properly

The Fifth Grade Website will be checked and updated on a weekly basis to keep it working effectively. The Internet is constantly changing and websites are appearing and disappearing all of the time. Therefore it is important to check to make sure that all links on the website work properly. If a link is no longer working it needs to be removed so users will not be confused by broken links. It is also important to look for new websites that can be added to the Fifth Grade Website to improve it. Another thing that needs to be constantly monitored and reviewed is the information that is presented within the website. The information that is included on the Fifth Grade Website needs to be correct because students who are using it need to be able to use it for researching purposes. The information will be reviewed and corrected at the same time the links are checked so the site can remain very useful. To show the users that the information on this website has been updated and corrected on a regular basis there will be a date posted showing when it has been updated. Showing the date on the website's homepage will inform users that this site has been updated on a regular basis.

The third characteristic of the Fifth Grade Website is an effort to show a clear purpose for why it was created. The users should be shown a clear reason why a website has been created. In most educational websites, like the Fifth Grade Website, the purpose usually is determined by a school's goals and objectives. "The goals and objectives become the guide for selecting appropriate activities to incorporate into a web page" (Quinlan, 1997, p. 17). The users need to have access to the goals and purpose statement of a website so they know whether or not the page contains the information that they

seek. A good purpose statement allows users to navigate through the Internet quickly and effectively.

The purpose statement for the Fifth Grade Website is found beneath the title of the website on the homepage. The purpose statement has been kept clear and concise to ensure clarity for the users. The purpose of this site is to “enhance the educational experience of students through the use of technology.” This purpose statement is not complicated, but it does show the reason why this website was created. The students will use this website to achieve some of the objectives that have been set at their school. The specific objectives that will be addressed through this website are included within the activities that are found on the website. It is important that users realize why a website has been created to see if they want to visit it and the purpose statement is a good way to accomplish this.

The fourth thing that was included on the Fifth Grade Website to make it useful is information about the website itself and its creator. It is important to add this background information so the users can determine whether the information presented is credible. For example, when looking for information on lung cancer more credible information would be found on a cancer foundation’s website rather than on a sixth grade student’s website. Without appropriate identification, however, it may be difficult to determine who created the website and how accurate the information may be. The information that is given about a website and its creator does not need to be extensive, but it does need to be informative. “Every web page should have the name of the page, the full name of the sponsor, name of the author, and any professional qualifications of the author

prominently displayed on the top of the page” (Maddux, 1998, p. 26). This information provides users with enough facts to make decisions on ways to use the website.

On the Fifth Grade Website the information about the website and its creator is located on the bottom of its homepage. The name of the website (The Fifth Grade Website), the name of the author (Brent Thiessen), and the author’s qualifications (fifth grade teacher at Edward White Elementary School) are included within this information. There is also a link on the homepage that takes users to a web page that includes more information about the author of the website. The information that is given about the site itself and its author will provide users enough information to make a decision on the credibility of the information presented. The information is kept short and only gives what is needed. If more information is needed, the users are prompted to send an e-mail to the creator with any questions that they may have about the website.

The fifth thing that makes the Fifth Grade Website useful is that it includes language and word forms that are used correctly. “One of the most deplorable conditions of the web is the widespread prevalence of spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors” (Maddux, 1998, p. 27). It is difficult to understand a website if there are errors in the written manner of the information. Missing words or punctuation show a lack of knowledge by the creator and reflect negatively on his or her website. A correctly punctuated and worded website can serve as a model to children who are learning how to properly use words in their own writing. If the creators feel that it is unnecessary to proofread their website for errors then visitors will feel that visiting the sight is unnecessary as well. A well-written website presents to users that the website is worthwhile to visit and that it is going to contain useful information.



The Fifth Grade Website has been proofread and reviewed by others to ensure that all of the words and language are used correctly. While constructing the website, the spelling and grammar check functions were used as a first check on the linguistic accuracy. However, a spelling and grammar check function does not always find all of the mistakes that could be present on a website. This site has been checked many times by the creator and other people have been asked to test to see whether the spelling and grammar are used correctly. Hopefully this will allow for all of the mistakes to be found and corrected before the website is available on the Internet. There may be some errors that are found as the website is being used and they will be corrected during the weekly updates to the site. It is important that a website that is designed for use by fifth grade students is written correctly so it can serve as a model for them to follow. Proofreading the information using spelling and grammar check programs, self-tests, and having others test the website will allow for the Fifth Grade Website to be correctly written.

### The Project

The project will be focused on developing a website made up of several different pages that all cover separate topics to enhance the learning experiences for fifth grade students. There is an introduction, a resources page, and a set of assignment pages containing a WebQuest that allows students to explore Iowa, a WebQuest that explores math Internet games, a rain forest investigation, and a database unit for creating an NFL team. These pages comprise this project (Appendix A).

The introduction page provides links that allow the user to navigate throughout the website. The purpose of this page is to capture the students' attention and to get them motivated to explore and learn more about what is found on the website. There are

graphics located on the main page that show that the entire website will be dealing with education. Text is limited on the main page so it will not disinterest anyone who comes to the website. The graphics, links, and limited text that are used on this page are sufficient for showing the visitors what the website is all about. There are links located on this page that will enable visitors to navigate to all of the other pages on this website. Links are also provided on all of the other pages that will allow visitors to return to the main page so they can continue to navigate easily through the website.

The resources page includes links to other websites that the students can visit for extra practice on school topics and assignments. This page includes links to sites that let students create their own math flash cards that they can use to practice math facts. There are other math sites that students can visit from this website providing them with opportunities to explore math on their own. There are also social studies links on the page that give the students access to maps and information that may be valuable to them to use to complete their assignments. The resources on the page are updated constantly to make sure that the links work properly and so the best educational websites are listed.

There are message boards located on the Fifth Grade Website to allow the students to communicate their thoughts and opinions about the website and any other topics that they choose. There are four different message boards found within the Fifth Grade Website. Each of the message boards will serve a different purpose. There is a main message board that can be visited from the main page. This message board will be used by students to post comments they may have about the website. The students can also post questions that anyone can answer as well as give suggestions on other things that could be included on the website. Another message board is found within the

“Aliens Invade Iowa” WebQuest activity. This message board will allow the students to post the attractions that they found through their investigation. Posting their data allows other students to see what everyone is coming up with and it also can lead to discussions between students. The next message board is found within the “Create an NFL Team” database activity. The students will use this message board to list the city they chose to locate their own NFL franchise. Again this message board will allow students to share their ideas and comment on the other groups’ results. The last message board is found within the Rain Forest Investigation. This message board will be used to post any information the students locate while learning about the rain forest. Like the other message boards, this one will be used for sharing and discussion purposes. There is a great deal of value in using message boards because it allows the students to work collaboratively with other students who may not be geographically near them. Distance learning becomes more cooperative and effective through the use of this communication feature.

Another page that students can visit is the assignments page. This page shows the students the things that they will be doing in class for an entire month. The assignments are updated on a monthly basis throughout the school year to keep the students informed of what they will be doing everyday and when things will be due in class. The assignments page shows a calendar for each month that lists the things that will be done in mathematics and social studies for each day. Color is used to highlight an assignment that is due to make it easy for students to see. This allows both parents and students to stay informed on what things are being taught in school. Parents can then use this information at home to practice and reinforce the skills that were developed in school. It

also allows students and parents to work together to develop a schedule that will allow them to finish their assignments on time, while also having time to do other things.

One of the assignments that the students do in fifth grade is a WebQuest that focuses on Iowa's attractions. The lesson is titled, "Aliens Invade Iowa!" Aliens have landed in Iowa and are looking for a place that they can call home. The students are asked to create a travel plan for the Aliens to follow that will show the Aliens all of the great attractions that are found in Iowa. The attractions that are included on the travel plan need to be entertaining so the Aliens will choose to live in Iowa instead of destroying it. This WebQuest was created to allow the students to work together to learn about what attractions are found in Iowa. There are several links to web pages that have information about Iowa that are included within this lesson to help the students complete the travel plan. Also included within this WebQuest is a rubric that will let the students see how they will be evaluated on this assignment. When the students have finished the Alien WebQuest they will record the attractions that they found using the message board that is found on the Fifth Grade Website. The students will then share the information that they found with the rest of their class. After viewing the information the class will decide whether the Aliens would want to live in Iowa and why they believe it would or would not be a great place for Aliens to live.

Another WebQuest that the students experience in fifth grade allows the students to review Internet math games. This WebQuest allows the students to practice their math skills while also exploring the games that are the Internet that focus on math topics. The students evaluate six Internet-based math games that focus on different math skills. Students will evaluate these math games based on the math skills they are investigating,

the difficulty of the math game, and how enjoyable they thought the game was to play. The students will also record their opinions about the game so they can use them in their presentations.

The students can also use the website to conduct their own investigation of the rain forest using the Internet. This web page provides students with links that will provide them with information and activities that deal with the rain forest. The students can choose to explore such topics as rain forest destruction, rain forest animals, rain forest inhabitants, and rain forest products. This page was designed to be used in distance learning situations. That means that students from all over the country can work together to complete an investigation on the rain forest. The entire rain forest investigation will take students ten days to complete. There is a message board attached to the rain forest investigation to allow the students to communicate with one another about the information that they have found about the rain forest. A quiz and other activities are included in the investigation so the students can learn as much about the rain forest as possible. The students are encouraged to form opinions about the rain forest and then support their opinions using the information that they have gathered through the investigation. At the conclusion of the rain forest investigation the students are asked to present their opinions of the rain forest and share the information that they collected.

The last page that is found in the assignments section has the students explore databases to find out how the NFL decides where to locate their teams. The lesson, "Create Your NFL Team," focuses on comparing numbers and geography skills. The students are given a database that shows statistical information about the current NFL

teams. Included within the database are the locations of the NFL teams, the populations of the states where the NFL teams are located, the states' television rank, the normal December temperature of the teams' locations, and the number of people who attend the teams' games. The students use this information to draw conclusions about what makes a city a good place to place an NFL franchise. After they have drawn conclusions on the current NFL teams, the students complete their own database using different cities from the ones that currently have NFL teams. The goal of this lesson is to locate a city that would be a good place to support a new NFL franchise. After the students have chosen a city for their NFL team, they will create a logo and name for their franchise. Then they will post this information on a message board so everyone can explore which cities the other students chose. This lesson allows the students to determine which factors are the most important to consider when the NFL chooses where to place their new franchises. The students will use math and social studies skills to create their NFL teams.

### Conclusions

The Fifth Grade Website was designed in a way that will allow it to be used by students at school and at home. It is this flexibility that will allow the website to have a positive impact on the educational experience of the students who will use it. The website contains activities that will be completed in school and it also contains links to resources that can provide students with extra practice on their math or social studies skills. The connection between school and home is strengthened through the creation of this website. The website shows what activities are being done at school as well as providing ways in which parents and students can enhance the educational experience through the Internet.

The use of the Internet allows for the curriculum to be available to both students and parents outside of the school setting. Using the Internet and computers motivates the students to do their best work, which is why the computer would be the perfect tool to distribute the curriculum. If the curriculum becomes more Internet-based, teachers will need to become more knowledgeable on website design. The Internet can be a useful tool, but the information that is presented on it needs to be done correctly.

Using websites and the Internet as an educational tool is continuing to increase as the amount of technology in the schools increases. It is important that teachers embrace this new educational tool by increasing their knowledge and use of the Internet so they can effectively educate students. The Fifth Grade Website will continue to be updated with new activities and information that will enhance the students' educational experience even more. The Internet and websites are the future of education and they must continue to grow and adapt to meet the needs of the students who will be using them.

## References

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**Appendix A**

# Mr. Thiessen's Site

Version 2002

Sunday, July 14, 2002 1:07 AM

Your site for all the latest fifth grade news at Edward White Elementary School.

## Links To Visit

[Information About Mr. T](#)

[Calendar of Assignments](#)

[Student Resources](#)

[Edward White Elementary](#)

[Leave Your Comments](#)

Welcome to Mr. Thiessen's Fifth Grade Website.



The site that always makes you smile.

## Activities To Enjoy

[Create An NFL Team](#)

[Math Games Review](#)

[Aliens Invade Iowa](#)

[Rain Forest Investigation](#)

[E-Mail Me](#)



**Beseen**

Last Update: July 15, 2002

This page has been created by Brent Thiessen, a 5th grade teacher at Edward White Elementary School. This page has been created to help enhance the educational experience of all students. There are educational links found on the page that allow students to practice the skills that they are using in school. There are also activities found on this page that relate to the fifth grade curriculum at Ed White School. The main goal of this site is to show students that learning can be entertaining and fun.

Please e-mail me if you have any questions or comments.

Enjoy your visit!

# Resources, Links, and Help

<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Subject Area</b>
Online Calculator	Use this calculator to solve tough math problems.	Math
Ask Dr. Math	You can ask Dr. Math any math questions.	Math
Cool Math 4 Kids	Lots of great math games and puzzles.	Math
Figure This	Math challenges for the entire family.	Math
Fun Brain	Many excellent math activities.	Math
Flash Cards	Create your own flash cards to print out. Also provides worksheets for additional practice.	Math
Social Studies Sites	Gives you lots of great social studies sites to visit.	Social Studies
State Trivia	Lots of good trivia about all 50 states	Social Studies
Map Sites	Need a map? Many maps to choose.	Social Studies
American Presidents	Information about all of our Presidents.	Social Studies
Iowa Counties	Great place to find information about Iowa.	Social Studies
Just For Kids	Lots of neat facts.	Potpourri
Fact Monster	Facts, facts and more facts.	Potpourri
Houghton Mifflin	Covers both math and social studies - games, help sites, and current events	Potpourri

[Return Home](#)

# Message Boards

[Return Home](#)

Name (Required):

Use only your first name.

**From:** - Mr. Thiessen (thiessen\_brent@north-scott.k12.ia.us)

**Message:** Please keep your comments short and to the point. You must include your name and e-mail address before you click "send."

# Calendar Of Events

Assignments will be added one week before school starts.

[Return Home](#)

## August

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19 Teacher Inservice	20 Teacher Inservice	21 Teacher Inservice	22 First Day of School	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31



# Aliens Invade Iowa!



A WebQuest for 5th Grade Social Studies

Designed by Brent Thiessen

[thiessen\\_brent@north-scott.k12.ia.us](mailto:thiessen_brent@north-scott.k12.ia.us)

## Introduction

Aliens have landed in Des Moines, Iowa and they have taken control of the state. They are planning on destroying Iowa unless someone can persuade them to live here. The Aliens are looking for a place to live that offers them a unique living environment. They want to live in a place that has fun and historical attractions. You have been chosen as the tour guide for the Aliens because you have a knowledge of Iowa. You have one week to show the Aliens that Iowa is a place worth saving. It is up to you to save our state before the Aliens destroy it. Good luck!

## The Task

Your group must develop a travel plan to show the Aliens Iowa's attractions. You can show them 2 attractions each day for six days. Each day's locations must come from a different section of the state. Travel time is not an issue because you are allowed to use any mode of transportation available.

Your task is to create a travel log showing the Aliens where they will be taken in Iowa. It must convince them that Iowa is a great place for them to live.

## The Process

1. First you need to find a partner to work with. <<NOTE: YOU WILL HAVE 3 DAYS TO COMPLETE THIS>>
2. You will need to read the descriptions of the jobs and choose a role to play.



**Historian** - will locate places in Iowa that have been important in the history of our country or state. This person is responsible for locating places that the Aliens would find educational and entertaining. These are places that

will teach the Aliens about our country or state.



**Adventurer** - will locate places in Iowa that are adventurous and fun. This person is responsible for locating places that the Aliens would like to visit for adventure. These are places that require the Aliens to use a great deal of energy to enjoy.

3. Research Iowa looking for locations that will complete your job.
4. Make a list of these places along with any information you find about where the place is located, the reasons it was chosen, and a description of it.
5. Locate each of these places on a map of Iowa. Remember only use one colored section of the state each day. See Map
6. When you have found enough attractions, complete the Travel Log Worksheets. This worksheet needs to be completely filled in and will be turned in at the end of your presentation.
7. After you have completed the worksheet, you will post your findings on the message board. You will need to type in the name of the attractions that you found. You do not need to include any of the other information.
8. Present the travel plan and the daily chart to the class. Your presentation may include any outside materials needed to support your plan.

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## Resources

To complete your jobs and save Iowa from Alien destruction, you may use any of the following sites about Iowa. You may also use any other written resources to help you complete your travel plan. You may use the Iowa - People and Places books, encyclopedias, your Iowa packet, and interviews to complete the task.

[Click here to go to the Resource Page](#)

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## Evaluation

Your group will be evaluated according to a rubric. This rubric will show your group exactly what they must accomplish to be successful. The group will be evaluated based on how well you accomplished the task listed above.

[Click here to go to the Scoring Guide](#)

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## Conclusion

After completing the travel log and schedule, it would be wise to review your work. While reviewing your work, think about what you have learned from your research. It is also important to make sure that you have completed the assignment correctly by asking yourself some questions.

Did we show the Aliens all of the great things that Iowa has to offer?

Did we waste time traveling back to places that have already been visited?

Does our presentation show Iowa as a unique and interesting state?

What other things can we add to our presentation that may convince the Aliens to live in Iowa?

The Aliens are anxiously awaiting your presentation. Iowa is counting on you to show them a good time.

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## Credits & References

Special thanks to:

[Animation Factory](#) for the animated pictures.

[Ferrarapan.com](#) for the fruit characters.

[UNI](#) for allowing me to make this WebQuest.

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[Return Home](#)

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# Math Games WebQuest



A WebQuest for 5th Grade Math

Designed by Brent Thiessen

thiessen\_brent@north-scott.k12.ia.us

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## Introduction

There are many math games located on the web. Some are entertaining and others are a waste of time. Everyone loves to play games because they are fun and make learning more enjoyable. Wouldn't it be great if you could play some of these games during math class?

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## Task

Mr. Thiessen has asked you to find one math game that your classmates would enjoy playing. You are asked to play a variety of math games and review each of them. Then you will create a report to convince your classmates to play one of these math games.

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## Process

1. Download and print the Math Games Review Sheet before beginning.
  2. Browse the list of math games found below and complete the review sheet for each of them. Take your time when evaluating the games to make sure that your review is accurate.
  3. After completing your evaluations, choose one to create a report on. This game should be the one that you feel is your favorite and one that your classmates would also enjoy.
  4. Spend more time playing the game that you chose to create your report on. Think of ways to convince the audience that this is the best math game for them to play during math class.
  5. To help you create your report, look at the evaluation guide below. This will tell you the things that you are going to be graded on and it will also help make your report better.
  6. Complete the report and present it to the class.
- 

## Resources

These are the math games that you need to evaluate using the review sheet. You need to fill out the review sheet completely.

Tic-Tac-Toe

Math Baseball

Change Maker

Guess the Number

Cookie Dough

Place Value Puzzler

## Evaluation Guide

Your report will be evaluated using the chart below. Your report can be written or typed. You will also earn 10 points for completing the review sheet and turning it in. You are encouraged to actually show the class the math game that you chose.

	<b>1 Point</b>	<b>3 Points</b>	<b>5 Points</b>
<b>Support</b>	The report offers no examples as to why the math game is the best.	The report uses 1-2 examples as to why the math game is the best	The report uses 3 or more examples as to why the math game is the best
<b>Informative</b>	The report does not offer or show any information about the math game.	The report includes information about the math game from the review sheet, but the game is not shown to the class.	The report includes information about the math game from the review sheet and the game is shown to the class.
<b>Appeal</b>	The report is not interesting to the audience.	The report gets the attention of the audience.	The report gets the audience's attention and keeps it throughout the report.
<b>Correctness</b>	There are many punctuation and spelling errors in the report	There are 2 or 3 punctuation or spelling errors in the report.	There are no punctuation or spelling errors in the report.

## Conclusion

Math games should be fun and educational. It is important that you look for games that offer more than just excitement. If you can convince your teacher that these games are educational and entertaining, you may be able to play them more during class time. Good luck and have fun.

[Return Home](#)

# Rain Forest Exploration

[Syllabus](#) [Schedule](#) [Assignments](#) [Resources](#) [Teacher Links](#)

## Syllabus

### Contact Information

Brent Thiessen - 4th grade teacher Edward White Elementary School

Phone Number - 285-8115

Office Hours - Vary from day to day. Let me know when you want to meet and I will be there to meet with you.

E-mail - [thiessen\\_brent@north-scott.k12.ia.us](mailto:thiessen_brent@north-scott.k12.ia.us)

Home web page is located [here](#).

If you have any questions about the Rain Forest Exploration or need an explanation of what to do, contact me. I want to be as available as possible so I can help you through this exploration. I will reply to any e-mail messages sent to me within 48 hours. You can also leave a voice mail message on my phone at any time.

### General Information

Through this exploration I hope that you will come to some conclusions about the Rain Forest and its importance in the world. Your opinion matters! If you do not agree with things that you discover, feel free to express your feelings. You do not have to agree with me or anyone else, as long as you can support your feelings with actual data.

Also in this exploration, you will be using distance learning strategies. This means that you will have to submit some of your work through e-mail, discussion boards, and online quizzes. A list and description of the distance learning strategies utilized in this exploration are found [here](#).

### Exploration Goals / Objectives

- Students will develop an understanding of the rain forest and the things that are found in it.
- Students will draw conclusions from research that will lead them to their presentation.
- Students will use their research to create an informational presentation that they will present to the class.
- Students will use problem solving skills to create their presentation.
- Students will complete research using the Internet which they will share with other students through the use of bulletin boards.
- Students will research to find information about the rain forest that they will post on the message board.
- Students will use facts to support their presentation on the rain forest.
- Students will investigate the rain forest using a WebQuest and then express their opinions using e-mail.
- Students will use the Internet and distance learning strategies to construct a presentation on rain forests.

### Required Background

- Knowledge of how to use a web browser to navigate through the web.
- Knowledge of how to use e-mail programs.

### Before You Begin

- Explore this site completely.
- Become familiar with the assignments and expectations.
- Have fun with your Rain Forest Exploration.

### Grading

- A rubric will be used to evaluate your rain forest exploration.
- Please read the rubric before you start any assignments.
- The rubric tells you what is expected from you.
- To see the rubric click [here](#).

[Return Home](#)



## Create Your Own NFL Team

created by Brent Thiessen

You hear a knock on your door. You answer it and see a man holding a letter addressed to you. This man informs you that this is a registered letter from the NFL commissioner Paul Tagliabue. You cannot believe your ears . . . PAUL TAGLIABUE! . . . NFL! . . . You quickly grab the letter from the man and hand him a sizable tip. You rip open the letter and start reading . . .

TO : Informed Student

FROM: NFL Commissioner Paul Tagilabue

RE: NFL Expansion Possibilities

This is to inform you that the NFL needs your help regarding expansion possibilities. The NFL wants to find a city that can successfully support an NFL team in 2003. You are the only one that can help the NFL complete this important opportunity. Included with this letter you will find all of the necessary information and blank forms for you to fill out. You will have a total of 3 days to complete your research. At the end of this time period you will report your findings to the Commissioner's Committee. Thank you for all of your support over the years. The NFL and millions of fans are awaiting your recommendations.

You pinch yourself to make sure that you are not dreaming. OUCH! The NFL Commissioner wants you to choose the location of the next NFL franchise. You have always dreamed of being in the NFL. Now you have your chance to make history by choosing the city that will be awarded the next NFL franchise. Thinking about what a big job this is, you completely forget about the other papers in the envelope. Luckily, these four papers fall out of the envelope and onto the floor. On each of the papers is a number that represents the order that they are supposed to be read. You immediately get to work on choosing the next NFL city.

Before beginning make sure that you have paper with you to answer the included questions. These answers will need to appear in your final report to the Commissioner's Committee. Also it is important that you read everything before starting. This will ensure that you do the best job possible. You may also choose one person to work with to complete this report. You and your partner

need to share the work evenly because teamwork is important for success in the NFL and in life. Remember the NFL is counting on you to be successful.

[Click Here to Download the NFL Franchises Database](#)

## PAPER #1

### Examining Current NFL Franchises

Use the NFL Franchises Database to answer the following questions in your report.

1. What do you notice about these cities?
2. Do all of the cities have something in common? If so, what?
3. What category do you think is the most important to examine when deciding on NFL cities? Why?
4. What things are you going to look for when choosing the location of the next NFL team?
5. Why is it important to look at the current NFL franchises when investigating possible expansion cities?

The Commissioner wants a thorough report from you. This means that you must finish all of the steps in order. Please do not disappoint the Commissioner. Do not go on until Paper #1 is complete.

[Click here to download Expansion Database](#)

## Paper #2

### Creating an Expansion Database

Use the Expansion Database to gather the necessary information for your final report.

1. Download and print the database so you can add information to it.
2. Choose ten cities that you think would be good locations for the next NFL franchise. Make sure that you can locate these cities on a map.
3. Use the 10 cities you selected to complete the database.
4. Use the links provided to locate the necessary information. To fill out the database. [Click Here For Links](#)
5. When you complete the Expansion Database make sure that all of the information is filled in correctly.

Do not go on until you have finished the above paper. The information you collect here will be needed in your final report. The Commissioner likes people who take their time and do good work. Make him proud.

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## Paper #3

### Using the Expansion Database

Use your completed Expansion Database to answer the following questions.

1. How did you choose the cities to research?
2. What information was the most difficult to locate?
3. What information did you find to be the most surprising? Why?
4. Compare your Expansion Database to the NFL Database.
5. Do you see any similarities or differences between the two databases?
6. List the similarities and/or differences that you found.

The Commissioner just got an update on your progress. He is very pleased with the way that you are conducting your research. The NFL is anxiously awaiting your report. Keep up the good work.

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# Paper #4

## Constructing the Report

Use all of your information to complete a report that will be presented to the Commissioner's Committee.

1. Using the two databases, choose a city that will be awarded the NFL expansion franchise.
2. Construct a team name for this expansion franchise. The more creative the better. Have fun with this part.
3. Create a team logo that can be placed on the team's helmets. This can be a drawing that is inserted into your report.
4. Post your new team's information on the message board. Make sure to include your names, the team's name, the team's location, and a sentence telling why you chose this city. [Click Here For Message Board](#)
5. Write a speech to present to the commission explaining the following things:
  - a) Team Name
  - b) Team Logo
  - c) Team Location
  - d) The database information on your selected city.
  - e) At least 5 reasons why this city is the best choice.
  - f) Other information that will convince the Committee that this is the best choice.
  - g) To be successful on your report, look at the way the report will be evaluated.
  - h) Remember be creative and have fun with this report. The Commissioner loves to be entertained.
6. Present the report and the answers to all of the questions above to the Commissioner's Committee. Include personal experiences in the final report.

After completing this assignment, you go home and find a letter in front of your door. On the top of the letter it says "THANK YOU." You rip open the letter and look inside. You can't believe what you see . . .

[To Open Click Here](#)

<a href="#">Back to Create an NFL Team</a>	<a href="#">NFL Links</a>	<a href="#">Scoring Guide</a>	<a href="#">Teacher - Lesson Plans</a>
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[return home](#)