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Cornerstone 1 Reports : Expansion and  
Enhancements of the Thinkfinity Platform

The Thinkfinity Center for Innovative Teaching,  
Technology and Research

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7-1-2008

# Manual on Creating Web-enhanced Lessons Using Thinkfinity

Compilation of Guidelines

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Creating Web-Enhanced Lessons  
Using Thinkfinity

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## Standards Alignment

Thinkfinity's Standards Alignment feature allows you to find lessons that align with the New York State standards.

### To use the Standards Alignment feature:

- Open the **Educator Page**.
- Click on **Standards Alignment** in the top navigation bar. The center of the page includes the National standards addressed by each of the partners. Many partners also refer to additional standards in their lessons when appropriate.

- ARTSEdge lessons incorporate the National Standards for Arts Education.
- EconEdLink lessons address the Voluntary National Content Standards in Economics.
- EDSITEment references the following standards, accessible from their Reference Shelf.
  - IRA/NCTE Standards for the English Language Arts
  - National Geography Standards
  - National Council for the Social Studies Curriculum Standards
  - National Standards for Arts Education
  - National Standards for Foreign Language Education
  - National Standards for Civics and Government
- Illuminations lessons incorporate, or "illuminate," the NCTM Principles and Standards for School Mathematics.
- ReadWriteThink lessons address the IRA/NCTE Standards for the English Language Arts.
- Science NetLinks' content is organized around the Benchmarks for Science Literacy.
- Expeditions lessons are aligned to the National Geography Standards.

Some states in our State Education Network have also been working on their own state standard alignment projects with Thinkfinity.org's resources. Below is a list of those states and links to those projects.

Link to New York state standards including related lessons	<a href="#">Alabama</a>	<a href="#">California</a>
	<a href="#">Kansas</a>	<a href="#">North Carolina</a>
	<a href="#">New York</a>	<a href="#">Oklahoma</a>
	<a href="#">Utah</a>	<a href="#">Washington</a>
	<a href="#">Wyoming</a>	

Figure 1 - Thinkfinity Standards Alignment Page

- To reach the NY State standards, click on the link to **New York**.

**ThinkfinityNY and Beyond**  
*NYS Alignment Pages*

Here you will find over three thousand lessons and student interactives matched to New York State Learning Standards performance indicators and competencies where applicable. Alignments reflect the latest revisions of the New York State Learning Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics.

New resources are added weekly, so please visit often. Our content partners frequently update existing resources and as a result, you may find inactive links for some titles. We thank you for your patience during these upgrades and will link to the new and improved versions as soon as available.

Search by Title, Subject, Grade, Keyword:

Search by NYS Learning Standards:

Rate the Resource!  
 Help colleagues select the right resources for their students. Rate and

Figure 2 - New York State Alignment Page

Pick NYS Standard here and click GO.

- To search the New York State Alignment Page by standard, choose a standard from the – Search by NYS Standards box and click GO.

**Social Studies**

*Use links on right for key ideas, performance indicators and aligned MarcoPolo Lessons for each learning standard.*

Standard One: *History of the United States and New York*  
 Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in the history of the United States.

Figure 3 - Page displayed after you have picked a standards content area

- Pick the level (Elementary, Intermediate or Commencement) for the standard that you want.

**Standard 1: History of the United States and New York**  
 Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in the history of the United States.

**Key Idea** Important ideas, social and cultural values, beliefs, and traditions from New York State and United States history illustrate the connections and interactions of people and events across time and from a variety of perspectives.

**PI** Students gather and organize information about the traditions transmitted by various groups living in their neighborhood and community.

- Cultural Symbols and the Characteristics of Place
- Design Your Own Suburb
- Geography Skills and Your Town
- Sharing Your Town's History
- Your Changing Town
- What Is History? Timelines and Oral Histories

**Figure 4 - Standard 1, Elementary**

- Click on a lesson that meets your standard.
- The Lesson Details page will be displayed. It includes the lesson title, grade level, lesson URL, description, teacher ratings (if there are any), parent information, partner name, and NY State Standards Alignments. Click on the link to the lesson to go to the lesson.
- Alternately, from the Standards Alignment page, you can click on the link to Find Lesson. Here, you can search by Title, Subject, Grade, Content Type, Partner and/or Keyword.

**Find a Resource Aligned to NYS Learning Standards**

As in any search, the more criteria selected, the more focused the results. Default is all resources.

Search by Partner Name: 

- ArtsEdge
- EDSITEment
- EconEdLink
- Illuminations
- Read-Write-Think

Resource Title:

Search by Content type:

Thinkfinity Lessons  Student Interactives

Search by Subject Area(s):

All  Arts  Math  Social Studies  
 ELA  Science

Search by Grade Level(s):

All  Pre-K  2  5  6  11  
 Kindergarten  3  6  9  12  
 1  4  7  10

Search the NYS Learning Standards and aligned resources by keywords:

**Figure 5 - NY State Standards Find a Lesson page**

- The results of the search will be the Lesson Details page described above.

**NOTE:** Not all lessons that meet a specific state standard are listed. Lessons are continually being added.

## Searching Thinkfinity

You can find a wealth of resources by searching the entire Thinkfinity network – including Partner Sites and reviewed Weblinks.

You can start a search from

- o The Thinkfinity home page

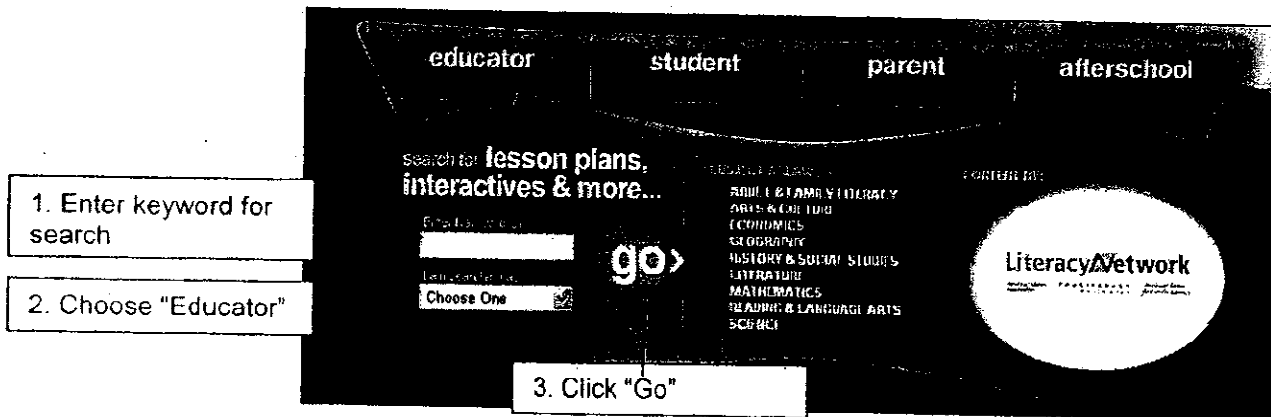


Figure 6 - Thinkfinity Home Page Search

- o Any of the educator resources pages on Thinkfinity

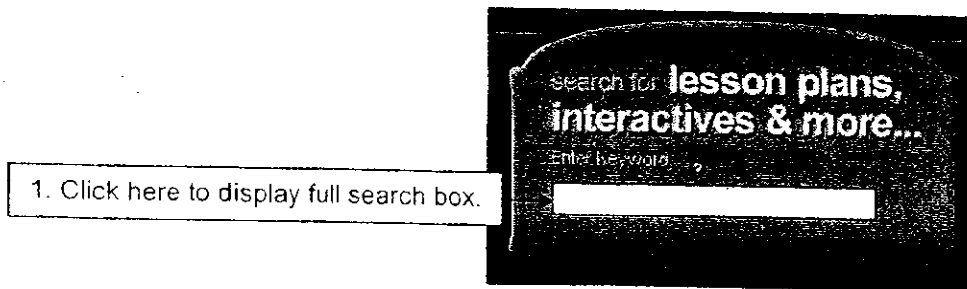


Figure 7 - Educator's Resource Page Search box

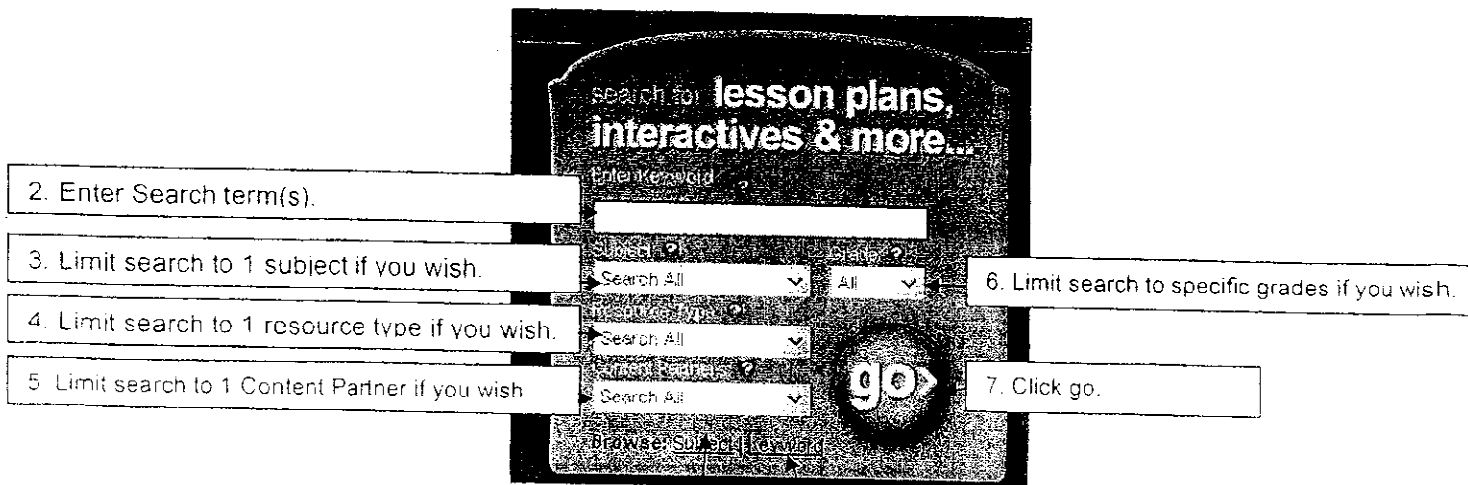


Figure 8 - Educator's Resource Page Search box expanded

Click here for lists of subjects or keywords

- Any of the Partner's websites:
  - On most of the Partner's pages, the Search button on the top of their pages takes you to a joint search for that partner and all other partner pages.
  - **ArtsEdge** has two Search buttons, one for searching just ArtsEdge and one for searching all of the Thinkfinity partner sites
  - In **Xpeditions** the Search button is part of the Resources panel on the left of the screen
  - A screen with content similar to that on the Educators' resource page is displayed. Fill in the relevant items.

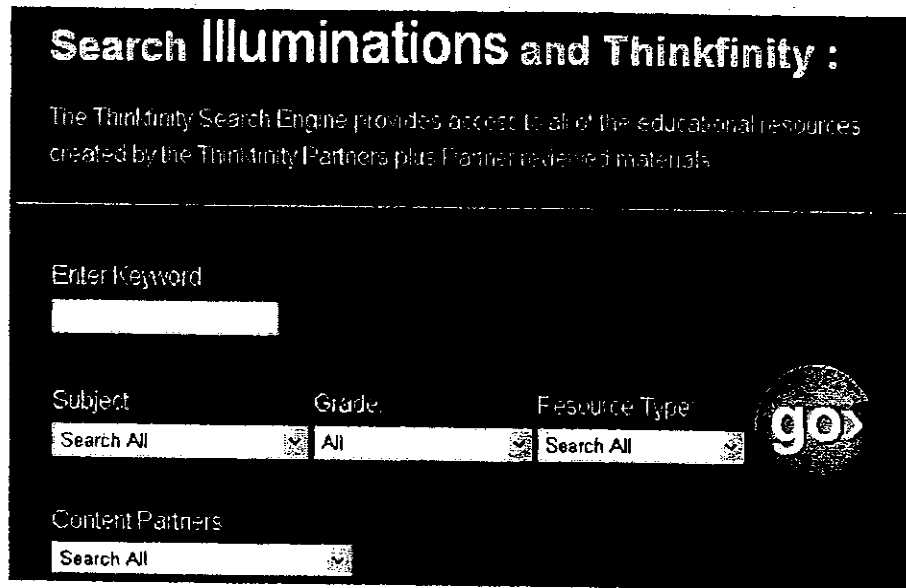
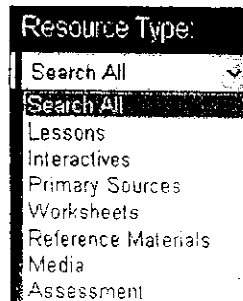
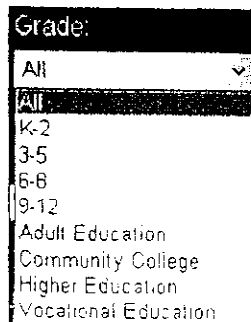
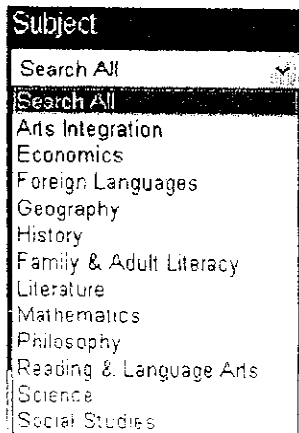


Figure 9 - Search box displayed from search button on Partner Site

**NOTE:** To limit the search to the Partner Page you are currently on, choose that Partner from the Content Partners drop-down list.

#### Choices for the four drop down search lists



## Search Results

Below is the Search Results page.

Once you are on this page, you can use it to search using a new keyword, or refine the current search by limiting it to only one type of resource, subject area or partner, or by typing a new keyword(s) that will be used to search within the current results.

The screenshot shows a search results page for the query "to kill a mockingbird". The page features a search bar at the top with the text "search results for 'to kill a mockingbird' (35)". Below the search bar, there are several annotations and UI elements:

- Limit type of resources displayed:** A box pointing to the "All Resources" filter.
- Type another keyword; only those sites previously found will be searched:** A box pointing to the search input field.
- Click in box to display expanded search box (figure 8) and /or type a keyword for a new search:** A box pointing to the search input field.
- Number of resources found:** A box pointing to the "(35)" next to the search results.
- Source of resource:** A box pointing to the "EDSITEment" logo.
- First resource found:** A box pointing to the first search result, "Profiles in Courage: Harper Lee's 'To Kill a Mockingbird'".
- Type of resource:** A box pointing to the "RESOURCES" tab.
- Grade:** A box pointing to the "GRADE 9 - 12" filter.
- Click to view more details:** A box pointing to the "VIEW DETAILS +" button.
- Resource types key:** A box pointing to the "resource types key" section on the right.

The search results list includes a resource titled "Profiles in Courage: Harper Lee's 'To Kill a Mockingbird'" with a description: "Lesson, one of a multi-part unit from EDSITEment, students read Harper Lee's 'To Kill a Mockingbird' carefully with an eye for all instances...". The resource is categorized as "Lesson" and "Primary Source".

### Organization of Search Results:

- Resources displayed 7 at a time
- First resources from Partner sites are listed; then resources from reviewed Web links
- Searches, particularly broad ones in the humanities, usually find links from multiple partners.
- One resource may fit into more than one type category
- A large number of listings are found for many searches. This is partially because the contents of one lesson can be listed many times – once for the lesson, and additional times for the other resources included in the lesson. Some of the activities on Web sites referred to in the lesson are also listed separately
- Some of the resource type classifications are broad. For example, while "interactive" resources include interactive web activities, they also include activities where student interaction is limited to responding by using a worksheet.
- REMEMBER: Not all resources that might be relevant are necessarily found by the search – the resource might not use the specific words for which you are searching

### Sample Searches

- Martin Luther King, Jr.
  - 109 resources – from the following Partners and their reviewed Web sites
    - 66 – ReadWriteThink
    - 34 – Edsitement



- 2 – EconEdLink
  - 4 – ArtsEdge (reviewed sites only)
  - 1 – Xpedia (reviewed site only)
  - 1 – Smithsonian National Museum of American History (not yet fully online)
- Searching within results for “I have a dream” limits results to 42
- **To Kill a Mockingbird**
  - 36 resources – from the following Partners and their reviewed Web sites
    - 20 – Edsitement
    - 15 – ReadWriteThink
    - 1 – Xpeditions (reviewed site only)
  - Types of resources
    - 0 – assessments
    - 2 – interactive
    - 3 – media
    - 3 – primary resources
    - 3 – worksheets
    - 13 – lessons
    - 18 – references
- **Volcano**
  - 1410 resources
  - How would you refine the search?
  - What other key words would you search for?

# Common and Unique Features of Thinkfinity Web sites

## Common Features

A common aspect of every Thinkfinity Partner Web site is that each site presents content within the framework of the four common features: Lessons, Web Sites, Standards and Student Materials. Although they may be named differently, each Partner Site has lessons, a listing of reviewed Web sites, reference to national standards, and materials and interactive tools / activities for students.

Partner Site	Lessons	Web Sites	Standards	Student Materials
<b>ARTSEdge</b>	Lessons	WebLinks	Standards	Look-Listen-Learn
<b>EconEdLink</b>	Lessons	WebLinks	Standards	Tools in CyberTeach's Teaching Resources; student pages with interactives embedded.
<b>EDSITEment</b>	Lessons	All Web Sites	Standards	Interactives / activities embedded within lessons
<b>Illuminations</b>	Lessons	Web Links	Standards	Activities
<b>ReadWriteThink</b>	Lessons	Web Resources	Standards	Student Materials
<b>Science NetLinks</b>	Lessons	Resources	Benchmarks	Student sheets and Interactives embedded within lessons and on Tools page
<b>Xpeditions</b>	Lessons	Recommended Links	Standards	Xpedition Hall & Interactives embedded within lessons and interactive Atlas

## Unique Features

There are many unique features on the Partner sites. Below you will find a few unique features that have been highlighted.

Partner Site	Unique Features
<b>ARTSEdge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How-To's</li> <li>• Spotlights</li> </ul>
<b>EconEdLink</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DataLinks</li> <li>• Current Events</li> <li>• CyberTeach</li> <li>• State Standards Correlation</li> </ul>
<b>EDSITEment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calendar</li> <li>• This Month's Feature</li> <li>• Reference Shelf</li> </ul>
<b>Illuminations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explorations</li> </ul>
<b>ReadWriteThink</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calendar</li> </ul>
<b>Science NetLinks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Science Updates</li> <li>• Student E-Sheets</li> </ul>
<b>Xpeditions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Atlas</li> <li>• Xpedition Hall</li> <li>• Activities</li> </ul>

## Thinkfinity Literacy Network



PROLITERACY WORKSHOPS



- More than 40 online courses for literacy instructors, community-based organizations, students and volunteers
- Exclusive best practices like the Life Span Literacy Matrix and Literacy Program Self-Assessment Tool
- Activities and instruction for English language learners and ESL instructors
- Searchable databases of hundreds of literacy organizations in need of volunteers
- Studies, research and statistics highlighting the importance of literacy development across the life span

## Smithsonian's National Museum of American History



Smithsonian  
National Museum of American History  
Kenneth E. Behring Center

The National Museum of American History dedicates its collections and scholarship to inspiring a broader understanding of our nation and its many peoples. We create learning opportunities, stimulate imaginations, and present challenging ideas about our country's past.

The Partner site from Smithsonian's National Museum of American History is coming soon. See <http://thinkfinity.org/about/partners.aspx#smithsonian> for more information

## Goal

Create one or more activities or lessons that use Web-based Technology:

- Tool, not goal, starting point or decoration
- Only use technology to add value
- Consider current lessons to technologically enhance

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## Critical Question

What are the ways in which technology can add value to a lesson?

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## How Can Technology Add Value?

- Access to resources otherwise unavailable
- Involve multiple modalities/medias
- Allow students to manipulate information/data/events
- Involve higher order thinking skills

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## How Can Technology Add Value?

*continued*

- Increase student control of learning
- Increase motivation
- Increase involvement/time on task
- Individualize instruction

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## Characteristics of Value Added Sites

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Multi-media     | Cultural differences/differences in perspective |
| Interactive     | Multiple options allowing for individualization |
| Primary sources |   |
| Unique          |   |
| Current         |   |

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## Thinkfinity

- Portal for :
- High-quality, standards-based resources to use in *technology-enhanced lessons*
- Includes access to a large collection of:
- Lessons
  - Reviewed, annotated web links
  - Embedded links
  - Interactive activities
- <http://www.thinkfinity.org>  
<http://www.thinkfinity.org/partners.aspx>

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## Thinkfinity Partners

- ArtsEdge - Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts
- EconEdLink - National Council on Economic Education
- Edsitement - National Endowment for the Humanities - art & culture, literature and language arts, foreign language, history and social studies
- Illuminations - National Council of Teachers of Mathematics

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## Thinkfinity Partners

- ReadWriteThink - International Reading Association; National Council of Teachers of English
- Science NetLinks - American Association for the Advancement of Science
- Xpeditions - National Geographic Society
- Smithsonian's History Explorer - National Museum of American History (coming)

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## Structure of Our Program

Today  
April 4 whole group session  
One-on-one sessions

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## Final Product

One or more activities to do with your students

- Using an interactive tool
- Using one or more already-created lessons
- Modifying an existing lesson to create your own
- Using resources to create a new lesson

NOTE: Website available if you want to post your lesson for easy access

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## Final Product

*continued*

- Teach the lesson
- Provide feedback
  - Lesson
  - Thinkfinity
- Bonus: List of Web resources that you can use in future activities

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