Using the Web for Research

You can do a lot of your background research for an interview or story online.

1. Start with a reliable search engine, like Google.com or Yahoo.com.

2. Make a list of your best search terms. Search terms should include the main idea and key subjects.

3. The best way to find a person is to put quote marks around the person’s name, then add words that describe the person’s latest project. Be sure to spell the person’s name right!

   FOR EXAMPLE:
   For Eileen Collins, who was captain on the Discovery space shuttle flight, try these search terms:
   “Eileen Collins” Discovery “space shuttle”

   This will bring up a list of sites that include those terms. Putting quote marks around terms forces the search engine to give you exactly those words in that order.
   If you just typed in Eileen Collins without the quotes, you would get sites with Eileen and with Collins, but not necessarily the person you are looking for.
   To find bio information on Eileen Collins, type “Eileen Collins” biography. You might want to add the words astronaut or NASA to further narrow your search.

5. You will also be looking for news stories on your topics. The best place to find articles and quotes is on Scholastic News Online, Google News, Yahoo News, or aol.com.

6. Print out the stories that best suit your needs and read them over. Use a highlighter, pencil, or pen to mark information that is important to your story. This will make it easier to find when it’s time to write.

7. You can use your research to compile questions for an upcoming interview, to write your story, or to conduct further research.