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Britannica Online School Edition

The Big Picture

“**Britannica Online School Edition** actually includes four products that will definitely fit the needs of a wide variety of users. This online encyclopedia enables users to search for age-appropriate content that specifically addresses the reading levels, interests, and abilities of students within one simple access point. Contained within this package is the Encyclopedia Britannica for high school students; Compton's by Britannica for middle school students; Britannica Elementary; and Britannica's new program for the PreK-2 grade set called Britannica Learning Zone.

Each of these programs (except for the Britannica Learning Zone) provides students with a wide range of access points including an Index, the A-Z Browse, a Subject Browse, the Year in Review, the World Atlas, Timelines, Video Browse, and more. In addition, the encyclopedia articles and student activities are aligned to state curriculum standards, which makes using the online encyclopedia in the library or the classroom an easy way to teach encyclopedia access and use.

Britannica Online School Edition provides over 450 Teacher Resources and Learning Materials for subjects such as math, science, and social studies at specific instructional levels and enhances content for students through additional safe Web links. The library of current magazines and journals used within the online resource are updated monthly, plus, students can easily access unknown terms through a single click that links them directly to the Merriam-Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus, which is built right in.

Britannica Online School Edition currently contains over 24,000 images, photos, illustrations, maps, and video clips (which can be downloaded and added to presentation software to extend the instructional process), as well as biographies, time lines, spotlights, a world atlas, and more.

Britannica's Learning Zone for PreK-2 provides a unique program for the youngest of learners. Through classroom-tested, interactive learning programs within the encyclopedia, young children can participate in games; listen to audio segments; watch videos; learn the alphabet and vocabulary words that build toward reading; and learn numbers, colors, time, sounds, and much, much more.

A Teacher's Guide includes ideas of ways to incorporate the Learning Zone program into lessons that directly relate to the curriculum. Subject areas such as science, language arts, math, and social studies are integrated into the various

activities and games, allowing teachers to easily use Learning Zone throughout the instructional day. Teacher Tools, which include the ability to create classes, add students, and select specific content for instruction (eliminating more difficult content for younger students), allows the teacher to control the instructional resources for each child while monitoring their progress.

Look & Feel

Each level of **Britannica Online School Edition** provides similar access points and user information, which allows students to easily transition from using the elementary version to the middle school one. Because of the similarities in user access, functions, and directions, this online encyclopedia can easily be used by almost every student within a school district.

Teachers and librarians can set up the online encyclopedia to a specific level of student or allow students to access the entire program. Users can begin searching the entire program (which will result in a search of all levels of the encyclopedia at once) by entering a word or phrase in the Search Box. The returned results page will display content at the elementary, middle and high school levels.

Students who choose to select a particular level of encyclopedia will find the program provides a wide range of resources arranged in colorful, yet easily identifiable boxes on the Web page with content search topics listed. Subjects showcased on each search page include Important People, This Day in History, Feature Articles, Highlights, News Headlines, Discover America, and more specific items for each grade level such as the Britannica Blog for high school users and the Animal of the Day for elementary users. Regardless of level, each program allows users to easily search, browse, or become engaged in the content by typing in a search term or selecting an area of interest to explore.

How It Works

Because **Britannica Online School Edition** covers content for students in grades PreK-12, students can simply begin their research within the appropriate level by accessing the encyclopedia's home page. However, by selecting a button at the bottom of the page, students or teachers may switch between the different levels of encyclopedias, thus making the content appropriate for every student in the class, regardless of ability.

Each of the three main levels has age-appropriate encyclopedia and magazine articles and student-friendly Internet links, videos, and time lines. The Compare Countries section allows students to compare two countries side by side through the use of the World Atlas and the Discover America feature.

Within the encyclopedia article pages, students can choose to print, email or save content. Information within the article results page also provides links to related images and media, magazines, and web sites selected by Britannica to supplement the encyclopedia information. Additionally, there are thousands of images and

videos that can be downloaded and used in projects and presentations, making the use of **Britannica Online School Edition** a primary source to locate and utilize video clips and images for research assignments. Because resources can be cited through a citation tool—which automatically generates resource citations for articles, images, and videos—students will be less likely to use the Internet for multimedia content. Students and teachers can also save articles, media, web sites, and learning materials in the Workspace tool within Britannica by creating their own accounts to access their materials later.

The Unsure of Spelling checkbox at the top of the search page allows users to indicate when they might need help with spelling search terms—and the results from those queries are most often excellent! In addition, through the use of the Merriam-Webster dictionary within the database, students can easily click any word within an article to see an instant definition. By clicking the red speaker icon students can also hear the pronunciation of the word.

For Students and Teachers

Teachers will appreciate the Curriculum Standards feature within Teacher Resources that allows them to select their subject area and grade level to view the standards for their particular state and then see the encyclopedia articles and student activities that support these standards.

Students at every level will find that **Britannica Online School Edition** provides quality online resources that not only answer the basic questions often asked when doing encyclopedia research, but also add multimedia content, images, and additional material that eliminate the need to search endlessly on the Internet for inferior resources.

Elementary teachers using the Learning Zone module will love the ability to select appropriate content for their specific classes, set up student work groups, and generate reports of students' progress. Additional content within the Learning Zone module, such as the Numbers and Shapes activities in the Play section, the videos in the Explore section, the vocabulary words and alphabet in the Read section, and the Drawing tools, make this component of the online encyclopedia a special addition for those schools serving preschool groups."

BOTTOM LINE "Without a doubt, **Britannica Online School Edition** provides resources above and beyond what most print encyclopedias could ever provide while engaging students in research that captivates their attention and encourages them to continue their search. Because of the wide-range of accessibility for students of all levels and abilities, as well as the flexibility to move within the encyclopedia to find the most appropriate content, Britannica's Online School Edition is definitely an **A+** program."

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