

# James Abela ELT

## Using Search Engines effectively for planning ESL lessons

[www.jamesabela.co.uk](http://www.jamesabela.co.uk)

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## Outline

- Introduction
- How A Search Engine Works
- Types of Information
- Choosing a search Engine
- Engine Keywords
- Assessing the results
- Planning Process
- Example Lesson Plan
- Conclusion

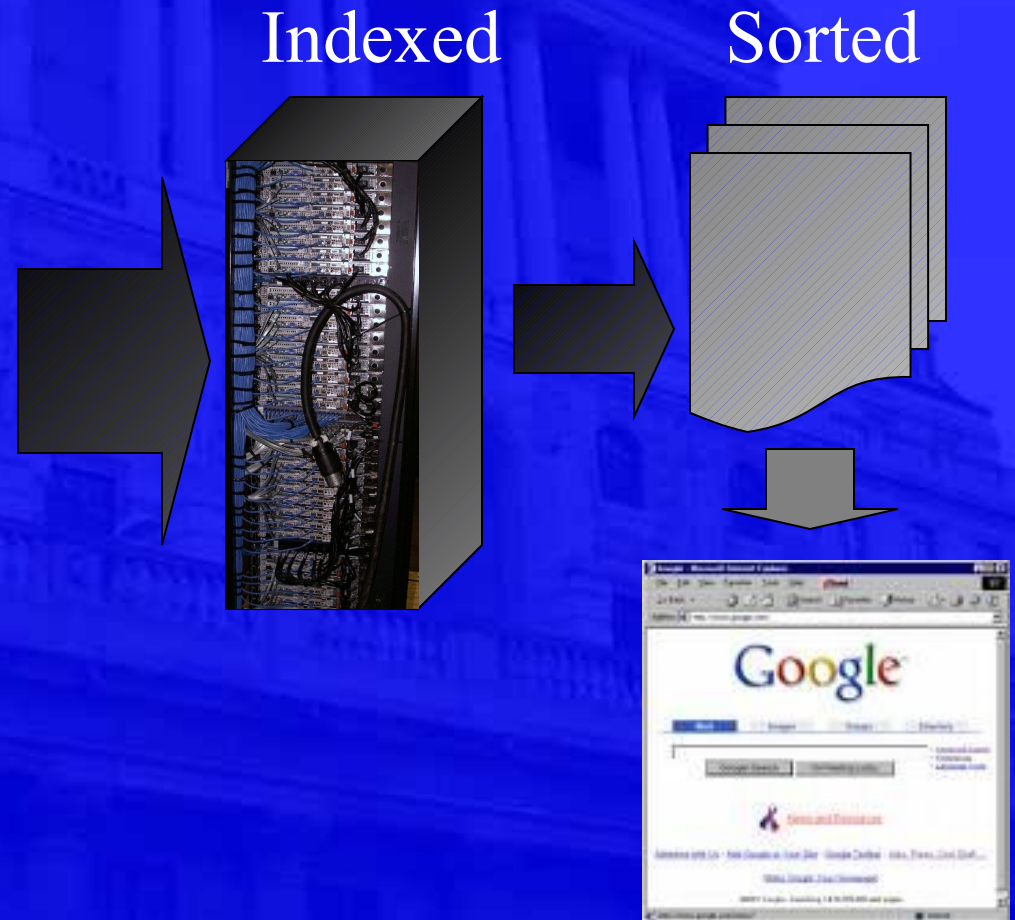
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## Introduction

- Google holds approximately 14,250,000,000 pages written in English
- Vast Teaching Resource
- Challenge is to sift through it

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## Web Crawlers



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## Other Engines

- Use own databases e.g. Encyclopaedias & Dictionaries
- Customisable engines restrict their searches to limited Websites or allow user prioritisation



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## Types of Info

- Vocabulary enrichment information
  - Definition
  - Frequency
  - Pronunciation
  - Usage
- Topic information
- Ready Made lesson plans

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## Vocabulary Enrichment

	1	2	3	4	5
Ask.com		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	D,E,T
Dictionary.com		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	D,E,T
Ask Oxford	 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	D,Q,N
Merriam-Webster		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	D,T,W
Cambridge	 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	IPA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	D,I,PV
British National Corpus		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	E	PS,W
Wicktory	?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	D	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	D,E,T

### COLUMNS

1 Dialect

2 Own DB

3 Verbal

Pronunciation

4 Definitions

5 Searches

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## Topic Information



Wikipedia – Encyclopaedia



IMDB – Movie reviews, information & trailers



igougo – Travel Reviews



Lastminute.com – Holiday information



World Factbook – Country information

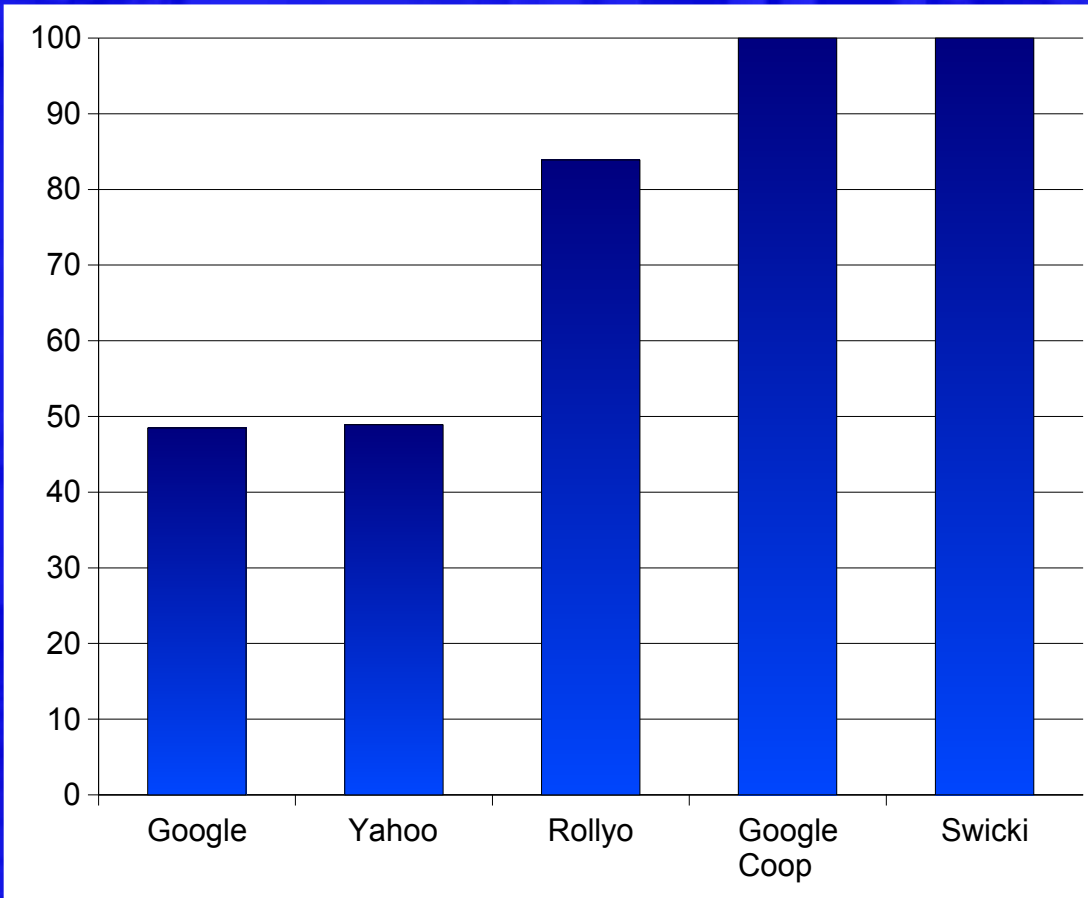


The Star – Malaysian news



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## Ready Made Lesson Plans



**Searches:**  
Travel lesson  
Shopping  
lesson  
Jobs lesson  
Collocations  
lesson  
Tenses lesson  
Prepositions  
lesson  
Past perfect  
lesson  
IELTS lesson  
TOEFL lesson

% of results that led to a contribution to a lesson plan

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## Keywords (Booleans)

Search	Results
The Apple	apple
+The Apple	apple the / the apple
“the apple”	the apple <b>NOT THE APPLE</b>
Bass	music & fishing
Bass –music	Bass <b>NOT</b> music

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## Assessing The Results

14,250,000,000 English pages

Brown's word 5000 > 18,000,000

“Bee in the bonnet” 10,000 pages

- Results measure of frequency
- Also assess topic popularity
- IT bias

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## Planning Process

- Aim of Lesson & Assumed knowledge
- Material
  - Form (Grammar / Structure)
  - Vocabulary – Meaning & Use
  - Context / Topic
- Lesson Walkthrough & Whiteboard layouts

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## Example Lesson

<b>Planning</b>	<b>Details</b>
Aim of lesson	To write a complaint letter about a hotel
Evidence	Students produce complaint letter
Assumed Knowledge of Students	Upper Intermediate to Advanced level English



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## Example Lesson – Material

### Context Material

- Engine: google.com.my  
Search: “poor quality hotel Malta”
- Result: Description of poor hotel in Malta  
Information from:  
*[http://www.travel-library.com/hotels/europe/malta/bugibba/topaz\\_hotel~0~75639.html](http://www.travel-library.com/hotels/europe/malta/bugibba/topaz_hotel~0~75639.html)*

### Writing Example

- Engine: Google Coop
- Search “complaint letter hotel”
- Result: Proforma complaint letter
- Information from:  
*<http://www.savvychicks.com/samplecomplaint.html>*

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## Example Lesson – Material

### Form

- Engine: Google Coop
- Search: “active passive”
- Result: Guide to the active and passive voice
- *Information from:*  
<http://esl.about.com/library/grammar/blpassive.htm>

### Vocabulary

- Engine: Cambridge Dictionary
- Search: “quality”
- Result: IPA & definition of the word
- *Information from:*  
<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>

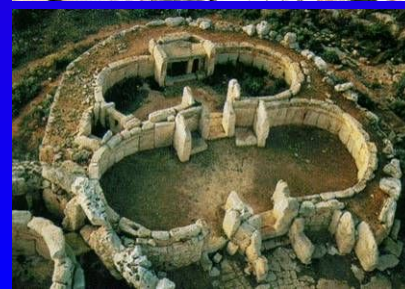
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## Example Lesson – Layouts

### Attractions Pictures

- Engine: igougo
- Search: "Malta"
- Result: Pictures of Maltese attractions

Which of these attractions would you like to visit?



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## Conclusions – Getting Results

- General Engines Most Data, but difficult to pinpoint info
- Specialist Engine better yields
- Customised Engines – Benefits of both
- Better searching = Better Results



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## Conclusions – Planning Process

### 6 areas that Engines can assist:

- Notions and topics
- Communicative situations
- Functions
- Vocabulary
- Pronunciation
- Grammar