What Is a WebQuest?

A WebQuest is a lesson in which students use the Internet to learn rather than learning from a textbook or other type of text. Students explore various websites given to them by the teacher in order to give them information they need to achieve the objective of the lesson. These WebQuest lessons abide by state and national standards just as a traditional lesson does. Teachers can either design the task/process to be presented via a website, or they can just utilize word processing to give this information to the students. This lesson plan idea was designed in 1995 to be used by teachers from any school district and from any country. It is not supposed to matter how much access the teacher has to technology within her/his school district.

There are a few crucial parts of a WebQuest: the introduction, the task, the process, and the roles. The introduction of a WebQuest should be written in a way that makes the students excited to embark on their WebQuest. It should describe the problem in a way that makes the students want to solve the problem. The task should be fun and engaging so that this lesson does not become a list of websites for the students to research. The task should also be applicable to the students’ real lives. The process is also crucial to designing a WebQuest. Students and other teachers should be able to read the process and understand exactly what is required of the students in order to complete the task. Students have various roles that they fulfill throughout the lesson to complete the task given to them. These roles should be applicable to the situation/problem in the WebQuest so that each of their contributing tasks make sense with the overall task.

One example I found was a website, much like the ones we have created, in which the students could navigate the design of the WebQuest in order to understand their task, process and roles. The roles each had their own page. The teacher had included lesson extensions and the
rubric she used to grade the end product. Her task was to plan a road trip, and the roles of the group members were Trip Planner, Driver, Banker, and Car Dealer. In addition to the tasks within these roles, the group had some questions that they had to answer in order to complete the task.

Another example I found was not a website but a page on a website. It could have easily been turned into a word document, as it was just one page of information. This WebQuest was focused on answering questions about climate change with a focus on mathematics. This one was significantly less engaging, but I felt that it was important to review and discuss so that I would know what I should not do when creating my own WebQuest. This one did not have roles for the group members. The introduction was not exciting, and while it was based on a real-life issue, it was not applicable to the students’ lives. Rather than explaining the process, this lesson had a list of websites to use. So, this was a bad example of a WebQuest.

There are so many possibilities for this type of lesson. Something I might do is to have the students design a new cafeteria for the school. This would require them to research what is involved in building a structure. It would require them to use mathematical formulas as well as research what should be considered when designing a cafeteria. While this may not be directly applicable to the students’ current lives, it would allow architecturally-minded students to explore a skillset that might not otherwise be tapped into. Another possibility is for students to design their perfect vacation and create a brochure for it. This would require them to research possible locations, to budget money, and to be creative. My third idea is to have the students design a proper diet for a teenager. They would need to research how many calories a teenager should have, what an appropriate weight is for their age, ideas for budgeting and meal/snack preparation, and how to best plan around a student’s schedule.
Resources

http://teacherweb.com/tweb/WebQuests.aspx

http://webquest.org/

http://teacherweb.com/GA/FiveForksMiddleSchool/WQRoadTrip/index.html

http://www.mathgoodies.com/Webquests/climate/