

# The Amazing Library Race

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**CAL POLY** LIBRARY SERVICES  
ROBERT E. KENNEDY LIBRARY

## What is The Amazing Library Race?

- In-class Instructional Game
  - Loosely based on *The Amazing Race*
- Ideal for lower division courses without specific assignment
- Interactive
- Engaging
- Competitive
- Hands-on
- Fun!

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## History and Evolution

- Spring 2005
  - Developed by Jennifer Duvernay at Arizona State University for a Freshman Learning Community
- Fall 2010
  - Adapted for BRAE 128 – Careers in Bioresource and Agricultural Engineering course at Cal Poly
- Fall 2011
  - Used College-wide for Introductory and Orientations courses (for In-Library Instruction)
    - 10 different courses

## How to Play

- Students work in teams
- Theme or topic for each leg of the race
- Use the library website or a course-specific Research Guide to correctly answer a set of questions about the library and its resources in each leg.
- First team to complete all the legs of the race wins

## Active Learning

- Minimal Instruction – Students Jump Right In!
- *Learn by Doing*
  - Cal Poly's Teaching and Learning Philosophy
- So...

Let's Play!

## Teams

- Get into teams of 4-5 people.
- Create a name for your team.
- Select a Team Captain

## The Race

- There are 3 legs of the race.
  - Each leg has 3 questions.
- Use the Woodbury University Library Website (<http://library.woodbury.edu/>) to find the answers to the questions.
- Each team member must correctly answer all the questions before you can move on to the next leg.
  - Team Captain will bring all team members' answer sheets to the instructor for review
- The first team to complete all 3 legs WINS!

And the winner is...

The Method to the Madness

## Teams

- Size
  - Teams should be equal in size
    - 2-4 students/team
  - Teams can be assigned or self-forming
  - Difficult to manage more than 8 teams
    - Adjust team size according to class size
- Team Name
  - Students must select a name for their team
  - Team name and student name on all documents
- Team Captain
  - Students must select a captain for their team
  - Team Captain reports for the team
    - Minimizes traffic at the instructor workstation

## Goals & Learning Outcomes

- The Race can be tailored to the course to meet specific goals and learning outcomes
- At Cal Poly
  - Goals
    - Dip their toes into the “Library Ocean”
    - Plant the seeds for future learning in subsequent courses
    - Tackle the common pitfalls early on (e.g., citations)
  - What do I want the students to learn?
    - Intro/Orientation Courses (Bloom’s Level 1 – Understand)
      - Popular and common resources and services
      - Library catalogs
      - Discipline specific article databases
      - Citation types and components

## Legs of the Race

- Recommend 4-6 legs
  - Number depends on the amount of time you have in class
    - Number of questions in each leg can also vary
  - Each leg should address a topic or concept based on your learning outcomes
  - Each leg is color-coded with colored paper for clarity
- Envelopes for each leg
  - Contain sheets of paper with questions
- At Cal Poly
  - About the Library
  - Articles, citations, and plagiarism
  - Books
  - Articles
  - Citations

## Questions

- Number can vary from 2 to 10
  - Again, this depends on the amount of time you have (e.g., 50-minute one-shot, 3-hour lab)
- Questions can be general or discipline-specific – you decide!
- Questions should require students to use a resource to find information
  - Point students to library website or research guide
- Questions should be “SMART”
  - Specific – Aligned with goals and learning outcomes
  - Measurable – Easily assessed and verified
  - Attainable – Easily answered
  - Realistic – Actual tasks/situations they may encounter
  - Timely – Important and relevant

## Examples & Research Guide

- **About the Library**
  - Where is the Research Help Desk located?
  - What are course reserves?
- **Articles, citations, and plagiarism**
  - List the 3 types of articles and the audience for each type.
  - What is Cal Poly's definition of plagiarism?
- **Books**
  - On which floor is [*specific book*] located?
- **Articles**
  - List two databases you could use to find articles on topics related to your major.
  - Create a search statement to find articles on [*specific topic*]. Use this to search [*specific database*] and list the title of a relevant article you find.
- **Citations**
  - Is the following citation for a book or an article?
  - Identify the [*journal title, article title, volume, issue*] in the following citation.

## Answers

- All members of the team must answer the questions correctly and consistently
  - No slackers – everyone participates
  - Relatively low incidence of copying – teams self police
- Answer sheet options
  - Questions with blank spaces for answers
    - Suitable for shorter races with fewer questions
  - Separate answer sheet
    - Answers only
    - Allows question sheets to be reused
      - Good for multiple sections
  - On their own paper, too
- Prepare an answer sheet ahead of time
  - Be prepared to grade quickly and fairly



## Prizes

- Small prizes for each member of the winning team
  - Increases motivation, engagement and competition
  - Disclose prizes...or not
  - Single prize or multi-level prizes (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>)
  - Examples
    - Promotional materials
    - Candy
    - Trophies or medals! 😊

## Preparation

- Goals & Learning Outcomes
  - Use these to shape the content of the Race
- Website/Research Guide
  - Make sure questions can be answered using one of these
- Legs/Questions
  - Prepare questions
  - Place question sheets in envelopes for each leg
- Worksheets
  - Prepare separate worksheet for answers if desired
- Answers
  - Make sure you have the correct answers to the questions on an answer key for quick and efficient grading
- Prizes
  - Determine accordingly

## Advantages

- Students become engaged in the activity
- Hands-on experience with the library and its resources
- Lays a foundation for future information literacy instruction in subsequent courses
- Can be tailored to the discipline and to specific goals and learning outcomes
- It's fun!

## Disadvantages

- Extensive initial preparation
  - Questions
  - Envelopes
  - Research Guide
- Frenzy of activity during the class
  - Questions from students
  - Grading answers
- Level 1 learning

Questions and/or comments?

Would this work for you?

- With your team, discuss and share...
  - Do you see yourself using this activity at your institution?
    - Why or why not?
    - Which courses?
    - What might be your goals and/or learning outcomes?