The Magnificent Library Race

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NUTRITION INFORMATION

The Magnificent Library Race provides an engaging and interactive way to teach introductory library skills and concepts to first-year students. Students respond well to the competitive nature of this activity, which translates into a positive library learning experience. The Magnificent Library Race can be adapted to fit any course or subject area, making it usable for both general education and discipline specific courses.

NUMBERS SERVED

Works best for groups of 15–40 students

COOKING TIME

Varies; can be any duration from 50 to 120 minutes

DIETARY GUIDELINES

This activity provides an interactive, hands-on, team-based learning experience for students to learn basic library skills and information literacy concepts. It provides a foundation for students to develop more discipline-specific and sophisticated research and information literacy skills.

MAIN INGREDIENTS

- ☐ Computer lab or access to devices with internet access
- ☐ Small (recloseable) envelopes
- ☐ Question sheets for each team and leg of the race (color coded for each leg)
- ☐ Answer sheets for students to fill in as they complete the race legs
- ☐ Promotional materials or other "goodies" that can be awarded as prizes
- ☐ LibGuide or other research guide, if desired

MAIN COOKING TECHNIQUE

Active, hands-on, team-based learning

PREPARATION

- ☐ Establish the race topics or themes (e.g., about the library, searching for books, formatting citations) for each leg of the race.
  - » Four to six legs are recommended.
- ☐ Create the questions for each leg (see Figure 1).
  - » You want students to get adequate experience with the topic or theme, so include the optimal number of questions (generally 4–6) to achieve this in the shortest amount of time.
  - » Questions should require students to use a library-related resource (e.g., library website, catalog, discovery tool) to determine the correct answer.
- ☐ Identify the number of students that will attend the session. Use this number to establish (roughly) the number of teams and students (3–5) in each team.
  - » Need to be as equal in size as possible for fairness.
  - » Teams can be assigned or students can form their own teams.
  - » No more than eight teams is recommended.
- ☐ Copy the question sheets (use colored paper for each leg) and package the questions for each team for each leg of the race.
  - » For example, if you have six legs and six teams, you will have 36 envelopes with question sheets.
- ☐ Prepare the answer sheets for students to complete (see Figure 2). Each student will complete their own answer sheet.
- ☐ Prepare the master answer sheet that will be used to verify students' answers.
- ☐ Gather the prizes that will be awarded to the winning team(s).
  - » One grand prize, or
  - » Prizes for first, second, and third place teams.
  - » Consolation prizes for all participants (small promotional item) are recommended, too.

COOKING METHOD

1. Form the race teams as recommended above.
2. Assign students (or teams) to a computer or device with internet access.
3. Ask each team to come up with a unique team name (just for fun!).
4. Ask each team to select a captain that will present the master answer sheet for verification of correct answers upon completion of each leg.
5. Pass out answer sheets to all students (each student must complete their own answer sheet to receive credit for the activity).
6. Direct students to the library website, guide, or other resources that will be used to find answers to the questions.
   a. Demonstrate resources as needed to allow for self-directed investigation.
7. Pass out the Leg One envelopes to each team.
8. Start the Magnificent Library Race!
9. As student teams complete the questions, the team captain will present the team's answer sheets for verification.
10. Teams will only move on to the next leg if they have answered ALL the questions correctly.
    a. If they have not, provide a hint or two and send them back to their team to try again.
11. Collect that leg's question sheet and envelopes (for later reuse).
12. Give the next leg's questions to the team captain.
13. Repeat steps 9 through 12 above until each team has finished the race.

14. Award prizes to the top team(s).
15. Have the students turn in their answer sheets to their course instructor for participation credit (or as determined for your specific need).

ALLERGY WARNINGS

Instruct teams not to write on the question sheets, as you will reuse them. Teams that do will be disqualified from that race leg and will no longer be eligible to win or place in the race.

CHEF'S NOTE

This activity requires extensive preparation, especially during the initial development of the questions. Many of the questions can be easily adapted for a specific discipline. The question materials for this activity can be reused in future instances, which significantly reduces the preparation time in the future. Library student assistants can help with stuffing the envelopes for future sessions.

Carefully consider the amount of time you will have with the students when determining the number of legs for the race and the number of questions in each leg. You will want to make sure students can complete all the legs in the race. Don't forget the time you will need to verify their answers.

Keep the questions and the answers as straightforward as possible. Make sure the answers to the questions are absolute. There is a frenzy of activity during the session, and it will be difficult to explain complex or confusing topics during the race itself. Verifying the student teams' answer

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FIGURE 1. EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

About the Library
- Where is the Research Help Desk located?
- What are course reserves?

Understanding Plagiarism
- What is [*your institution's*] definition of plagiarism?

Finding Books
- On which floor of the library is [*specific book*] located?

Finding Articles
- List the 3 types of articles and the audience for each type.
- 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.

Citing Your Sources
- Is the following citation for a book or an article?
- Identify the [*journal title, article title, volume, issue*] in the following citation.

sheets requires time and attention, so ask questions that you can quickly assess as correct or incorrect answers. Ask the course instructor to assist you or consider utilizing a peer assistant.

Name_____Team_____

The Magnificent Library Race Answer Sheet

You will form teams of 4 or 5 people. Please select a name for your team and a team captain. Each team member will turn in his/her own worksheet, but you will be working together during the race. There are four legs of the race, and they are to be worked on one at a time. The answers for each leg must be completely correct before your team can go on to the next one. The team that finishes the race first will win a prize.

Leg #1–About the Library

1.

2.

3.

Leg #2–Citing Sources

1.

2.

3.

Leg #3–Books

1.

2.

Leg #4–Articles

1.

2.

3.

FIGURE 2. ANSWER SHEET