

Britannica® ImageQuest™

This review was carried out by School Library Journal

Review By: Jennifer Prince

One image database to rule them all. Five years ago, Britannica released ImageQuest, a comprehensive, beautifully curated compendium of images. It's back and better than ever, with a million new options for kids of all ages.

Level

Primary level and up

Overview

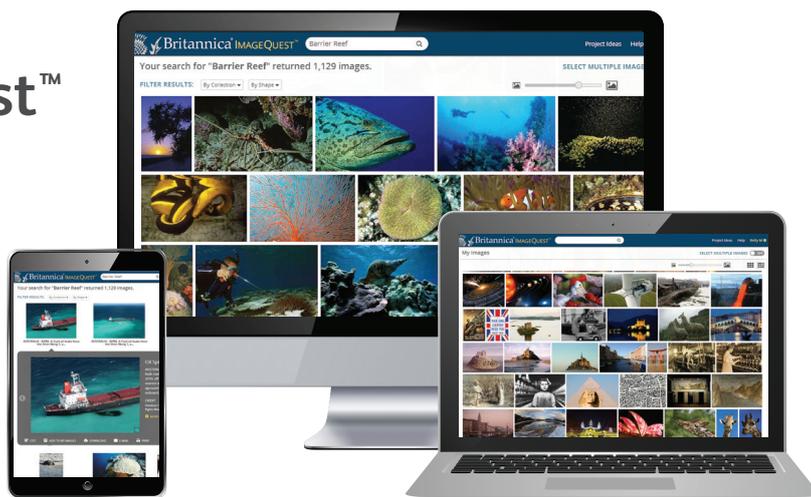
This product wowed educators and students with its initial release in 2010. Now, five years later, the product is bigger and better. Simply put, this is one of the most effective collections of images ever compiled, and even made SLJ's Best Databases. In their ImageQuest database, Britannica presents, in its own words, "millions of rights-cleared images from one trusted site." That's a hefty promise and one that Britannica delivers in an attractive and user-friendly style.

Content

The three million images (one million more than the 2010 version) consist of high-quality photographs, maps, and drawings of nearly everything in the world: from ladybugs to Lady Gaga, from Stonehenge to the Rolling Stones. The images come from 45 respected and diverse sources, including the British Library, DK Images, Getty Images, and the National Portrait Gallery, as well as Encyclopedia Britannica. All are rights cleared for noncommercial, educational use. The photographs are curated carefully, making this database a reliable, safe source for students of all ages.

Ease of Use

This resource is simplicity itself. The database is available 24/7 and is usable on any device. From the main page, students have a few clearly marked search options. Users can enter terms in a box indicated with the magnifying glass icon.



They can also browse from a small collection of albums containing finely curated, thematically related works. The featured albums rotate, and examples include World Cup Fever, Baby Animals, the Environment, Fashion and Art, Laughter, and World War I.

Students can search specific collections as well, i.e., DK, Getty, and so on. Happily, the content is advertising free. Once a desired image is found, users can click for a brief description. Another click yields a larger view plus a few more details. Once the image is enlarged, there are additional possibilities: citation information, the ability to add the image to a personal collection under "My Images," and download, email, and print options. Each photo comes with complete metadata, including the source, the copyright holder, caption, and keywords. Under "My Images," users can collect selections for the duration of a session. Britannica gives students the opportunity to store offerings more long-term by creating accounts. The function is easy: users simply drag and drop the image into the appropriate folder or click on "add to my images" from the detailed view of the photo.

Student and Teacher Resources

The images are ideal for use in teacher lesson plans, reports and projects, and activities. Also, the offerings can be used on school websites, newsletters, newspapers, flyers, and bulletins. With its enormous collection of copy-right free material, Britannica ImageQuest is ideal for public libraries, too. Patrons and staff will appreciate it for the same reasons that students and teachers will.

New Features

One of the new features is "Learn with Projects." Found at the bottom of the homepage, this feature is useful to a variety of educators, from primary to secondary school teachers.

They will find suggestions on how to incorporate ImageQuest into a variety of lesson plans, such as having students report on a topic using only pictures and having students create a personalized image dictionary. Also, the "Search" feature comes with more filters, including the ability to limit the search by collection.

Drawbacks

As Mary Poppins would say, this product is "practically perfect in every way." However, a few of the images are of doubtful utility. It's unlikely that students will need photos of U.S. Representative Howard Coble noshing at a National Peanut Month event in Washington, DC. Still, with three million examples to choose from, it's hard to quibble about a few odd choices.

VERDICT: A RICH RESOURCE

Britannica Online is comprehensive, accessible and versatile combining a very stylish, user-friendly interface with high quality, interactive and lively content – making this a top choice for schools.