PowerSearchingWithGoogle.com

Lesson 2.2: Thinking more deeply about your search

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This is lesson 2.2 and the idea of this lesson is how to get you to think more carefully, more deeply, more richly about what it is you're really trying to understand. So this lesson is really going to show you a few other techniques for getting information around the topic, and learning how to read carefully, what it means to use Google tools to do that.

So I want you to understand that there are tools to help, and let's talk about what those would be. The most important tool is reading carefully and then using word definitions that you can look up easily. So here I've done a query: [money that immigrants send home] is called what?
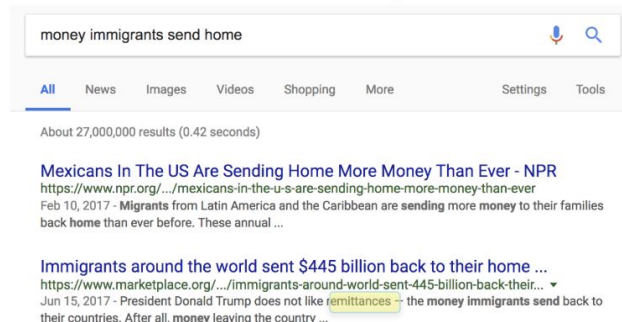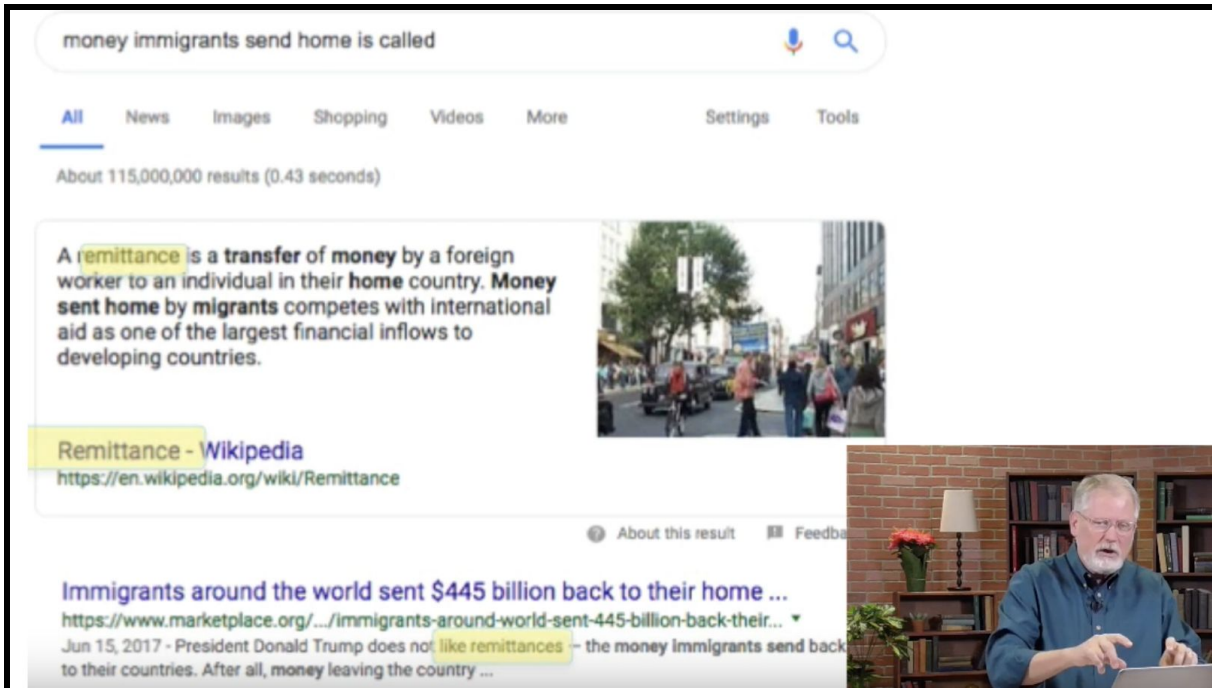
So that's a kind of common thing that comes up when you're reading news articles. So here I've done a Google query and I see these words that I don't really understand, so don't let words you don't understand disturb you. Here we've got three different words remittance, remittance, remittance, what is a remittance exactly?

Here in that little inset it gives you a definition from Wikipedia and you can certainly go through and click that, but the important point here is when you do a query and you see an unfamiliar term and in particular if you see it multiple times, get a clue. That's probably an important key term to understanding the concept in this case the word remittance is exactly the right word that you might want to use in a future search. So an important way to get a deeper understanding of these terms is by doing a definition, so here in Google you say define space term in this case remittance and you'll see that we actually give you a very nice dictionary definition. Let me do this for you live.

Here I've done the search for remittance and you can see not only do we have the word, we have a dictionary definition, but we also have this downward pointing arrow. That's a UI widget and when you see something like that you should pay attention to it because it probably gives you additional capabilities, additional power and in this case when you click on the down arrow it actually gives you the ability to switch it to another language and the ability to see the use of that word over time. So ever since roughly 1800 this is the frequency chart, that is, how often it appears in the Google book corpus.

So you can see remittance has been a pretty common term for a long time. That's not always true. Let's look for another word. I'm going to say [define literacy]. Now

you know what literacy means and of course you can click on the down arrow again and see that chart over time, but look at the difference. Here is the etymology; so in some words we show you that as well, but look at this! This chart shows me that literacy the word has only been really in common use since about 1950. I would have thought it is a perpetual idea. I would have been wrong.
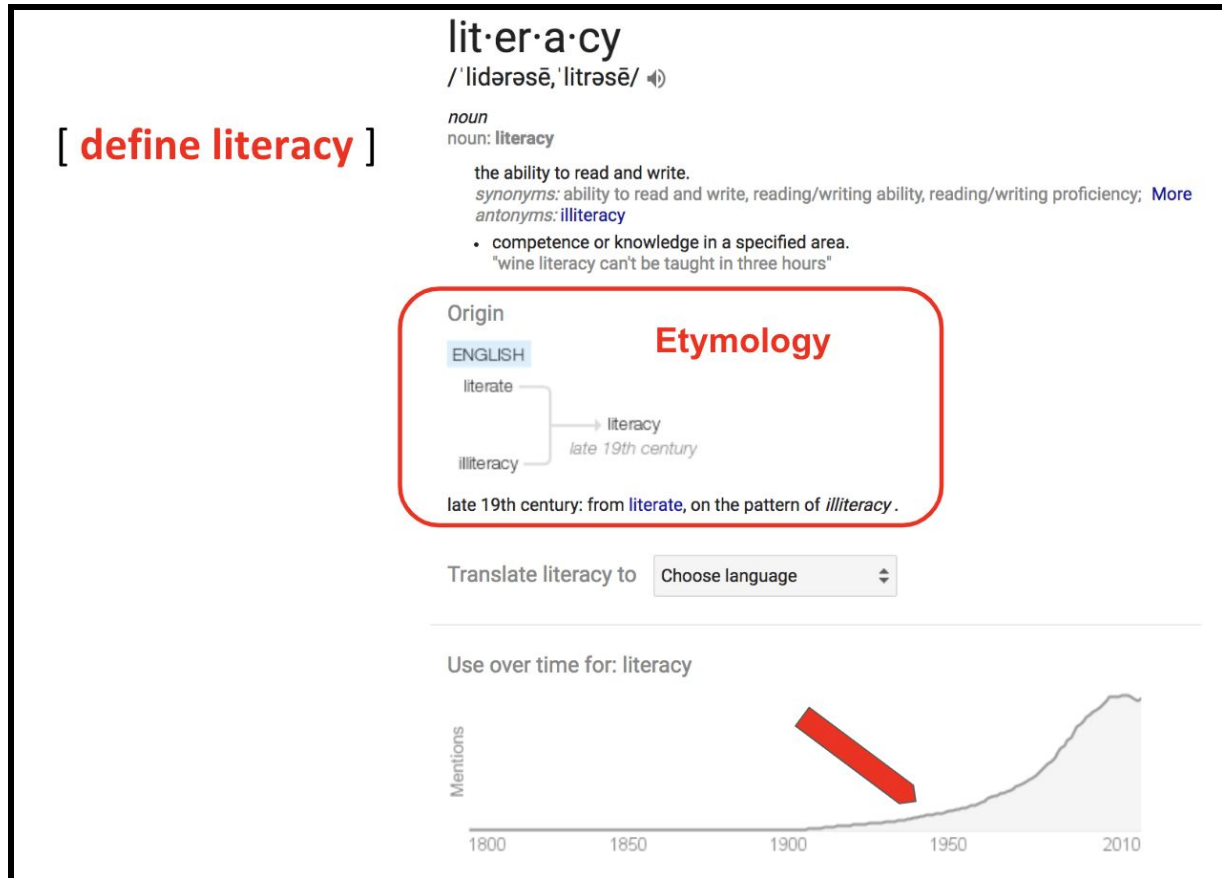
This is the kind of thing that you can start to use to expand your understanding of a concept. Remember also that we have these other things that will expand your understanding, so here we have *People also ask*. For example, what's the meaning of literacy in English.

And remember the related searches, they're down at the bottom of this one.

So here we've got three different ways to get more deeply into the understanding of the concept, in this case literacy. Now that you know how to do the definitions, you know how to read more carefully, and when you see words you don't understand, don't just ignore them, don't just pay no attention to them. Especially if they're repeated throughout the search results page; that's a clue that it's probably pertinent, meaning really important to your key concept, so use define, use it often and use it well.