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|  | **Activity Guide - Exploring Trends** |  |

## What’s a Trend?

When you post information to a social network, watch a video online, or simply search for information on a search engine, some of that data is collected, and you reveal what topics are currently on your mind. When a topic is quickly growing in popularity, it is often said to be **trending**, but there are many different trends or patterns we might find in this data, including historical trends. These patterns might help us to identify, understand, and predict how our world is changing.

## Using Google Trends

You will be using Google Trends, which is a tool that allows you to **visualize data** about search history across different times and locations**.** You will be **looking for interesting patterns, trends, or relationships between multiple trends** and **try to tell the story that pattern is showing**.

* Access it here: <https://www.google.com/trends/>
* To get started, you want to “Explore” a trend of your own.
* Find the Explore text box or go to the Explore section of the site <https://www.google.com/trends/explore>

## **Do your first comparison of trends**

You can enter any two or three things you like. This example compares **streaming**, **mp3**, and **cd**.

**Understand what is being represented:** Take a moment to actually understand what the Google Trends data is showing. Respond to the questions below. You can find answers on the [Google Trends Help Page](https://support.google.com/trends/answer/4355213?hl=en&ref_topic=4365599).

* Where does Google Trends data come from?

They come from all the google searches done on the search engine and all the data collected from each of these searches like location, age of searcher, etc.

* How is Google Trends data adjusted? What does a value of 100 mean?

Adjusted through new searches over 36 hours. The 100 is part of the scale that compares what you are looking for to all searches anywhere anytime not just that topic and how connected your trend is.

**Exploring Trends on your own**

Continue exploring comparisons of search trends that are interesting to you. You might start by looking up:

* **a current event / social movement / hashtag / meme**
* **your favorite hobby / movie / song / book / celebrity**
* **popular apps / businesses / products / websites**

As you try different terms, here are **some things to look for:**

* **Long-term trends:** Is your topic becoming more popular over time? Less?
* **Short-term trends:** Does your topic suddenly spike or dip in popularity?
* **Patterns:** Does your topic follow some predictable repeated pattern?
* **Relationships:** Does one topic increase or decrease in popularity when another one does?
* **Zoom-in:** You can narrow your search to particular regions, times, and categories

## Tell a Story

As you explore, you should eventually **settle on one topic** you find particularly interesting. For your chosen topic, **be prepared to present or share** what you found, responding to the following:

* **Describe** what terms you compared and whether you narrowed your search by using filters.

I compared several topics including Harry Potter, Percy Jackson, Weeks at the Castle, Dragon Trilogy by Jessica Day George, and other book series. I figured that I would get the best trends with the topics that have relevant (since 2004) and lots of information. Only Harry Potter and Percy Jackson had these. I then used my search results to narrow it down to see which book series has the most support in the different countries. Harry Potter had this with strong results in not only the US and Great Britain, but also former and current British colonies.

* **Accurately** **describe** what the charts or other visualizations are showing.

The world chart of Harry Potter shows where the most searches have their origin with the United Kingdom at 1st, Australia at 4th, and the United States at 13th. The cities that have the most searches related to Harry Potter are London at first, Sydney at 3rd, and several central america and south american cities at around 5th to 9th place. In the time trends you can see peaks at several times with the slow drop rate around July of this year.

* Come up with a **possible story or explanation of why** the trend you described might have happened.

I believe this trend of location derives from the fact that the book was originally an English published book. This explains why the United States and Great Britain are so into it. Since Great Britain is also a major superpower politically this probably caused the book to travel around the EU and gain its popularity in Europe that way. In the US, the book most likely got popular in New York as they also have a high influence on the rest of the country and London has a high influence on New York. The other south american and central american cities that have high popularity is most likely explained through growing support and love for the series in the US and Great Britain. The peaks shown in the timeline also coordinate when a movie or a book was published/released. The decline around June 2020 also lines up with J.K. Rowling’s tweet about the LGBTQ community.



