

Getting Started with United Streaming

United Streaming is a subscription-based online video library sponsored by Discovery Education. Our schools have a current subscription, which allows any staff member to browse, play and even download the videos. Visit www.unitedstreaming.com to get started.

Getting Started: In order to use United Streaming you will need to set up your own user account by entering your school's passcode in the "New User" area of the United Streaming home page. You will need to provide some information about yourself, but may check boxes that ask them not to send you newsletters or contact you otherwise. Use passcode CDD9-EB47 for Thatcher Brook and B26F-AD1C for Crossett Brook.

Setting Preferences: Once you establish your own account you should see links for My Content, Preferences, and Home in the top (blue) navigation bar.

- *My Content* lists videos that you have previously bookmarked. Users also have the ability to share their bookmarks with their school or district (Waterbury/Duxbury), and this can be an excellent way for teachers who share common content to collaborate and help each other find effective resources.
- *Preferences* allow you to modify or add to your account information, as well as choose the media player and mode that you would like to use for video playback. Video can be played with either QuickTime or Windows Media players, and can be embedded in the browser window or played in a "stand-alone" player. When played in a stand-alone player the video window can be resized (enlarged), however the more it is expanded the poorer/grainier the video quality. *** Mac users will not be able to play video in an embedded Windows Media Player, and QuickTime is recommended. Mac users *can* use Windows Media Player in "stand-alone" mode, but the video will not play until it has completely downloaded. Windows users are also recommended to use stand-alone applications, but either player will work fine in either mode. Media Settings can be changed at any time (there is usually a preference bar below the preview window), so it may be convenient to browse and preview videos in "embedded" mode while using stand-alone applications for class presentation.
- *Home* will take you to either the default United Streaming home page *or* your own customized home page. Click on Preferences and then the "My Home Page" tab to see the options for customizing and using your personal home page.

Browsing the Collection: Once you have logged on to the United Streaming website, use the main search field (top center) or links on the left to search the video collection. The Advanced Search tool allows you to focus on specific details if you desire.

Viewing Video: Once you have found a selection you wish to view, you have the choice of viewing the entire video or selecting short segments. Click on the link or tab to view a list of segments and their subject headings. Once you have selected an individual video you can also bookmark it by clicking "add to My Content." When you are viewing the video description you will also see a tab for Related Content, which may include articles, lesson plans, worksheets, quizzes and more.

Classroom Viewing: To view videos with an entire class, an LCD projector and external speakers are recommended. This equipment is readily available in both schools and can be signed out using the Equipment Signout folders on our networks. As always, signing up well in advance assures that the equipment is available when you need it. Please contact our tech support team if you have questions about setting up or using this equipment.

Downloading Video: Video files can be downloaded for later playback, but there is no significant advantage in doing this vs. bookmarking the video. All files on United Streaming are lower quality than conventional videotapes or DVDs, and this is most evident as grainy images and poor audio quality. Downloaded files are no better quality than files "streamed" from the Internet. Downloaded files are also very large, and *may not be stored on network servers*. Downloading video content may be desirable if you wish to create a collection of topic-specific video on CD or DVD, but the production of this media can be time consuming. Technically, we are only allowed to "keep" video content as long as our subscription is current.

My Content: As previously mentioned, videos can be bookmarked for easy access later. You may create folders within your Content area to help organize your selected videos, and your folders/selections can be "shared" with others in your school or district. Once a video or other media file has been added to your Content, use the "Action" drop-down menu (right) to move or copy the file to another Content folder, share or delete the content.

And Much More: United Streaming is much more than just a video library. In the main search field you can also search for images, clip art, articles, songs, sounds effects, events, quizzes and lesson plans. The Teacher Center includes classroom tools and curriculum resources to help you integrate United Streaming content into your program. The Professional Development section includes teaching tips, best practices in technology integration and much more. This is a dynamic resource with ever increasing services and functions - let us know how we can help to make this tool as effective as possible for our students!