Name(s)_____ Period _____ Date _____
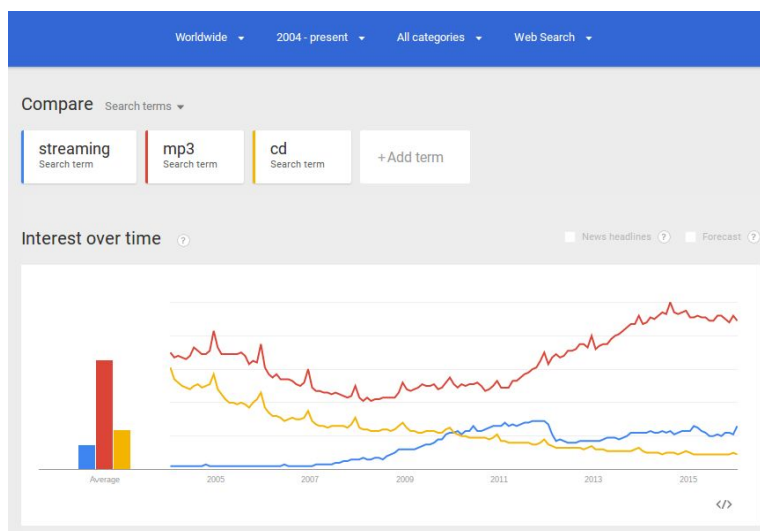
Activity Guide - Exploring Trends

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.
- Where does Google Trends data come from?

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

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.

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

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