The purpose of this document is to illustrate the process Tasha and a group of students went through as they solved a complex search challenge. Seeing examples of how others solved search challenges can be beneficial; you may gather some insights you can use when solving your own challenges.

My class is studying Ancient Egypt. The students keep hearing about a deadly curse on King Tutankhamen’s tomb, which was supposed to have killed people. Was there really a curse? If so, what did it say? If not, why do they think there was?

### What we know
- Howard Carter discovered King Tut’s tomb.
- Somebody who opened the tomb died.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Think we know</th>
<th>Want to know</th>
<th>Learned</th>
<th>Thoughts?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Howard Carter died soon after the tomb was opened.</td>
<td>Was it Howard Carter who died?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>“I just went to see the Tut exhibit at the museum and there was no mention of the curse, so the idea does not seem very credible to me!” --SV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Who died?</td>
<td>Lots of sites talk about Lord Carnarvon being the first one to die, and someone did a study and found that of the 26 people present at the opening of the tomb, only 6 died within ten years. (<a href="http://www.king-tut.org.uk/curse-of-king-tut/victims-of-the-curse-of-king-tut.htm">http://www.king-tut.org.uk/curse-of-king-tut/victims-of-the-curse-of-king-tut.htm</a>)</td>
<td>One of those headings might be helpful to use in a query.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[king tut curse died]</td>
<td>Many sites reporting this study use the same chart (e.g., <a href="http://sites.matrix.msu.edu/pseudoarchaeology/2010/10/25/the-curse-of-king-tut/">http://sites.matrix.msu.edu/pseudoarchaeology/2010/10/25/the-curse-of-king-tut/</a>), with column headings reading: “Event,” “Number of people there,” and “Number of deaths after 10 years.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is that study? [tut 26 6 died 10 years]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| There was a study done to examine deaths of people present when the tomb was opened. | Who did that study? [tut "number of deaths after 10 years"] | Herbert E. Winlock did this study about 12 years after opening the tomb (~1935). [http://www.mummytombs.com/egypt/kingtut.htm](http://www.mummytombs.com/egypt/kingtut.htm)  
  - an Egyptologist  
  - head of the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art  
  - present at the opening of the tomb | “Right now I am just exploring. I am exploring something I think is fake. Thinking about which sites to trust comes a little later.”--DB |
|                                       | Can I find the original study?             | Interesting information in [Tutankhamun: The Untold Story](http://www.mummytombs.com/egypt/kingtut.htm).                           |                                                                                                |
Lord Carnarvon is involved somehow; he died from the curse.

Who is Lord Carnarvon? [lord carnarvon tut]

How did he die? [lord carnarvon died]

Lord George Carnarvon, who paid for the expedition, was the first one to die, just weeks after opening the tomb. Infected mosquito bite.

- When he died, the lights in Cairo went out.
- When he died, his dog back in England barked twice and died.
- When he died, his son's dog barked twice and died.
- When he died, his dog s barked twice and died.
- When he died, a cobra ate his canary.
- When the tomb was opened, a cobra ate the canary that they had brought along to the excavation site.
- When the tomb was opened, a cobra appeared in England and ate Howard Carter's canary.
- When the tomb was opened, Carter's canary, back in England, fell over dead.

"Wait a second, I was totally believing the page I was reading until I heard all of these different stories! I guess you have to read more than one page to get a sense for what is really true—or some crazy version of the story." -JL

There are a lot of rumors. Winlock supposedly spent time writing newspapers that published stories about the curse.

What's up with all these versions of this story? Where did they come from? Are there newspaper articles that either demonstrate reporting on the curse as true or Winlock writing to refute the idea of the curse? 
[carnarvon OR carter canary] (in News)

Sample newspaper articles of the time:
- King Tut and Pa Wa (Lewiston Morning Tribune, March 7, 1930)
- Anecdotes of the Famous...
- Kiwanis Club Hears Vivid Story...
- Earl of Carnarvon Dies: Had Been Warned of Curse

See variation in stories, even at the time.

“Now I really start thinking about what sources I can trust.” -LB

“Lots of these articles and stuff are talking about sources (even quoting them) but are not actually saying where the information or quotes come from.”

It seems that author Marie Corelli had known about the curse.

[corelli carnarvon curse]


There was a common rumor

[carnarvon tut power OR lights]

Some archaeologists are jealous of Carter and Carnarvon and mis-translate hieroglyphs in photos to say there is a curse. Carnarvon’s son reported about the dog barking and dying, even though he was in India at the time, not Egypt or England. Carnarvon’s family had a deal with the *Times* of London to get a percentage of profits from all stories on the tomb.

**Expedition (peer reviewed) from The University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology—seems like a highly credible source.**

| One newspaper had all the rights to the story. | **[tut carnarvon estate exclusive OR deal OR agreement “the times”](in Books and News)** | Confirmed that Carter and Carnarvon had an exclusive deal with the *Times.*
- *Tutankhamun: The Untold Story*
- *Howard Carter: The Path to Tutankhamun*
- “READY TO REMOVE PHARAOH’S SHRINES; Carter Completes Photographic Record and Clears Objects in Mortuary Chamber. TWO GOLD MONKEYS FOUND They Are Supposed to Be Sentries to Protect the Sanctity of Tut-ankh-Amen.” New York Times, November 27, 1923 |

**Conclusion:** The curse does not seem true or reliable. Lots of people seemed to be using the rumors to raise their own status or make money.

We spent a lot of time on this and uncovered a lot of cool leads. We ran into many dead-ends because people were citing poorly or taking an “everybody knows this....” kind of approach. However, by comparing resources, we feel pretty confident that we found good evidence that the curse was fabricated.

**Advanced Power Searching skills:**
- Comparing multiple sources
- Books
- News Archive
- Match resources to kind of search
- Number range operator
- Strategies: specialization and generalization