

CONDUCTING SHORT RESEARCH PROJECTS



GRADE 6

Teacher Guidelines	▶	pages 1 – 2
Instructional Pages	▶	pages 3 – 5
Activity Page	▶	page 6
Practice Page	▶	page 7
Homework Page	▶	page 8
Answer Key	▶	pages 9 – 10

Classroom Procedure:

1. Begin the lesson by asking students to recall their recent experience in conducting research. What part was the easiest? What part was the most difficult? What could have made the process of doing and writing short research reports easier? Make a list on the board.
2. Distribute *What is Research?* content pages. Read and review the information with the students. Use the additional resources to enhance understanding.
3. Distribute the Activity page. Assist students in answering the questions. Write exemplary answers on an anchor chart or the board so that other students have a model to use for their own research. Read and review the instructions.
4. Distribute the Practice page. (You may have a template such as MLA or another form for students to use. The page is general information, and you can modify to fit your classroom expectations.) Check and review the students' responses.
5. Distribute the Homework page. The next day, check and review the students' responses. Post exemplary responses and student work where other students may view it.
6. In closing, ask students: What is research? What are the steps involved in conducting research? Why are citations and citing information important? Why are several different sources used in research?

Approximate Grade Level: 6

Objectives: Students will know how to select a topic and narrow the topic with questions to focus the exploration of their research. Students will learn the basic steps in conducting and writing research reports. Students will learn what resources are used in research, how to verify the credibility of the resources, and how to cite where the information comes from.

State Educational Standards*

LB.ELA.LITERACY.W.6.7
LB.ELA.LITERACY.W.6.8
LB.ELA.LITERACY.W.6.9
LB.ELA.LITERACY.W.6.10

Class Sessions (45 minutes):

At least 2 class sessions.

Teaching Materials/Worksheets:

What is Research? content pages (2), Activity pages (1), Practice page, Homework page

Student Supplies:

Handouts, pencils, pens, or highlighters

Prepare Ahead of Time: Copy handouts.

Options for Lesson: Students may work alone or in groups for the Activity. As an introduction to the lesson, often times it's good to demonstrate the opposite of what students are learning. Prior to the lesson, show this video

The Ten Top Essay Writing Don'ts

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n2iT-7h_Rmg

You may also want to show information about bizarre research questions. You can find this at...

Eighteen Bizarre Research Topics

<https://unbelievable-facts.com/2016/05/bizarre-research-papers.html>

By looking at the opposite of good research topic, this type of information can assist students in developing questions and a thesis that is relevant to the research.

*Lessons are aligned to meet the education objectives and goals of most states. For more information on your state objectives, contact your local Board of Education or Department of Education in your state.



Teacher Notes

The lesson introduces the concept of writing short research papers utilizing an eight-step process. The lesson teaches students the necessary organizational skills required to conduct and complete a short written research report. Students learn how to begin with a broad topic and narrow their focus to a research question or research thesis statement. Organizing material in a useful and comprehensible way is crucial for students in the research process. The lesson teaches a simple organizational strategy using index cards to help students in completing a short research essay.

What is Research?

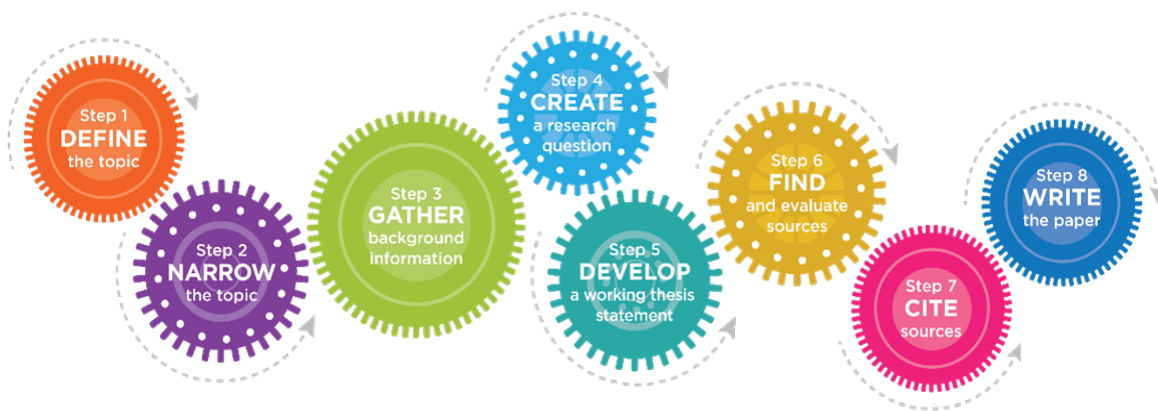


You have probably heard the term research more than once. No doubt, you have a general idea as to what research is. Maybe your teacher has assigned you a research report recently. Research is the **systematic** investigation into and study of materials and sources to establish facts and reach new conclusions. The word in bold print is critical to understanding how to conduct short research projects. The word systematic means there is an orderly process for conducting research. Once you have mastered the process, then finding and reporting information becomes much more manageable!

The Research Process: How to Conduct Short Research Projects

This chart is an excellent illustration of the steps in the research process.

THE RESEARCH PROCESS



Step 1. Clearly Define the Topic: Research begins with clearly defining the topic for your research. The simplest way to explain this idea is that when a person asks you what your research is about, you should be able to tell them in one sentence. If it takes more than one sentence to explain your topic may be too vague. Think of research as a funnel. You want to begin with a broad subject and then narrow your focus which leads to

Step 2. Narrow the Topic. If your topic is too big, then you will have too much information, or your research will be vague. Here is an example.



Linda wanted to conduct research about space. Her teacher asked her to explain what about space she was most interested in learning. Linda thought for a moment and responded, “I want to learn about the planets!” “All the planets?” asked her teacher. Linda thought for a moment, “No, just one planet.” “Which planet?” continued her teacher. “I will do my research on the planet Mars,” said Linda, and if Mars can support life.”

You can see how narrowing the topic helps to focus your research. Keep narrowing your subject until you can explain what your research is about in one sentence. For Linda, it is, "I am doing research to find out if Mars can support life."

Step 3. Gather Background Information: The next step is to find information about your topic. When gathering information, you want to make sure you keep track of where it comes from. Be sure to keep a record on a notecard. You will use this information later in Step 7. Here is a suggested format.

Step 4. Create a Research Question: What do you want to know about the topic? In Linda's research, her question is, "Can Mars support life?"

Step 5. Develop a Thesis Statement: Depending on your research, a thesis statement may not be necessary. For example, if you are writing a biography, you won't need a thesis statement. A thesis statement is a prediction (like a hypothesis in Science) of what you think your research will show or demonstrate, or what you want to prove with your research. Linda's thesis statement is, "The research will show Mars can support life."

Step 6. Find and Evaluate Sources: Research means more than copying stuff from the internet! You will want to find sources from books, magazines, and the internet. You will also want to make sure your sources are credible or real. Using sources that are questionable or are not verifiable will make people question your research and can result in giving people false or wrong information. Remember, your personal credibility is on the line. Make sure your resources are accurate and verifiable from more than one source. You wouldn't take advice from a stranger about something important to you, would you?

Title: (Book, website, magazine)
Source: (Book, internet, magazine)
Author: (Name of author)
Date: (Date published)
Notes: (Information from this source.)



Step 7. Cite Sources: This is the step when you use the information from Step 3. Citing sources means you tell your reader where your information comes from. There are several ways to do this, and more than likely, your school uses MLA, APA, or Chicago Style to format your citations. Here is an example from the first page of Linda’s research report of an in-text citation and the last page; the References Page.

Can Mars Support Life?

By: Linda Jenkins

According to scientists at the NASA, probes landing on Mars have found water (Smith, 2019). Water is one of the necessary ingredients for life to exist. The probes found ice which is an indicator.....

References

Smith, L. (2019). NASA’s Mars Exploration Program. [online] NASA’s Mars Exploration Program. Available at: <https://mars.nasa.gov/> [Accessed 3 Dec. 2019].

Notice how the Author’s name is used. A reader can read the sentence and go to the Reference Page to find where the information comes from. The reader can go to the website and read the article as well as verify the credibility of your source.

Step 8. Write Your Paper! Your teacher will have a format or template to guide you in this section. Keep in mind, research papers are well organized and contain several sources of information. By following these eight steps, you will be able to write the perfect research paper!





Instructions: For each topic, narrow the topic so that it can be explained in one sentence. An example is done for you.

Topic: Airplanes

Topic Sentence: I am conducting research on the types of bi-wing airplanes in World War I.

Topic: Oceans

Topic Sentence: _____

Topic: Cars

Topic Sentence: _____

Topic: Sports

Topic Sentence: _____

Topic: Games

Topic Sentence: _____

Topic: Fashions

Topic Sentence: _____

Topic: Music

Topic Sentence: _____

Topic: Movies

Topic Sentence: _____



Instructions: For the topic, find sources of information. On the blank index cards, create a source for a citation and write notes about the topic. Use the sample as your guide.

Title: (Book, website, magazine)
Source: (Book, internet, magazine) _____
Author: (Name of author)
Date: (Date published)
Notes: (Information from this source.)

Topic and Thesis Statement

Garbage, like plastic items, are harmful to the oceans and the environment. Plastic cups, straws, toys, and other types of plastics not disposed of properly are polluting the world's oceans. We can do something about the plastic contaminating our oceans.

Try to use different sources (internet, books, magazines, etc.).



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Answers will vary. You may want to substitute a format (APA, MLA, or other) for this part of the instruction that is currently used in class.

Does the student use a diverse set of sources? Are the sources relevant, credible, and related to the topic?

Blank lined area for student response.

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