

# The Four Stages of the Research (Inquiry) Process



# The Research (Inquiry) Process

Basically, the stage where you figure out what you're going to do!

## *Stage 1: Exploring*

- What do you know already (prior knowledge) about your topic?
- What keywords are related to this topic (it's okay to use wikipedia at this stage)?
- After gaining some background knowledge on your topic, develop key questions that need to be answered
- Narrow your ideas further to a focus question/argument and be ready to share with your teacher



Create a folder for the project, inserting a copy of the assignment and noting the due date(s). Keep your brainstorming (thought webs, mind maps, etc.) definitions of key terms, rough notes, as proof of your process work. Did it on the computer? Save it to a USB, Cloud, moodle, or folder!

Basically, the stage where you access the resources necessary to make it all happen!

## *Stage 2: Investigating*

- confirm the key words necessary for successful searches (this is where exploring should have helped you out) to find support and sources for your focus/argument
- gather a variety of print and non-print, academic, (maybe even peer reviewed) sources; remember to note citation information, incl. date accessed
- use the library web site to access EBSCO, Britannica, Historica, etc. to begin academic research
- fine-tune (or narrow) your focus question/argument as you investigate further



During this stage you may have a conference with your teacher. Keep notes during the session and add them to your folder. Your teacher may ask to see what notes you have on sources so far. An annotated bibliography may need to be submitted (see attached)

### ***Stage 3: Processing***

Basically, the stage where you organize your findings, critically analyse your information and evaluate your ideas

- choose from your sources the ones that are the most useful and significant to your research
- evaluate the purpose of all the information that has been gathered
- explain the significance of findings (in other words, “So what?”)
- identify the successes and challenges of formulating your ideas and finding support



During this stage of your research you identify what you have learned. Before you begin note-taking for your paper, it's a good idea to re-read the assignment instructions and rubric to ensure that the expectations are clear. If you are unsure about something, ask your teacher. Note taking includes summary and paraphrase writing, and linking of how your information relates to your focus/argument. Be sure to assess the value of the information found and its significance. Consider relevancy to your paper, as well as point of view. Begin organizing the information into the main sections of your paper. Keep track of where parenthetical referencing will need to be placed. Index cards are a way to organize points and subtopics; ask your teacher librarian for some!

### ***Stage Four: Creating***

Basically, where you create the product that presents your findings and consider “what next?” in terms of learning

- create the written product that is required by your teacher; usually in the form of a report or paper
- present your findings and reflections in a format appropriate for your audience
- reflect on your findings and what has been learned; an explanation of how new issues, questions or ideas that emerged during the four stages may influence future learning on your part



The creation of your final product is a culmination of the research that has gone on through the first three stages. Careful editing and revising for coherence, grammar, parenthetical referencing all goes on here. Check the assignment sheet again to ensure that all components have been completed and submitted. You may need to include your portfolio to demonstrate your process work. A self evaluation and reflection may also need to be submitted. In addition to a written component, you may be required to present your findings to your peers in an oral and/or visual way. This is an opportunity to show your teacher that you are able to transfer and extend your learning to an audience other than the teacher.

### **Annotated Bibliography**

A minimum of two sources must be print sources; at least one source must be peer reviewed  
Except for the bibliographic information, point form is acceptable for these sheets

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Proposed topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Source: \_\_\_\_\_

Bibliographic information organized and punctuated correctly for the type of source used:

What is the main idea/thesis/purpose of the work?

How is the information presented?

Overview? Detailed paper with notes and appendix? Statistics? Graphs? Images?

Is this a reliable, verifiable source of information? What are the author's qualifications?

Is the source biased in any way?

If yes, explain in what way and whether this has an impact on its usefulness to your research.

How will this source be useful for your topic? Which specific parts of it will you use?