

The Big 6 Research Method

How to Effectively Use Information
Sources to Find the Answers You
Need

1. Task Definition

1. Define the informational problem
2. Identify information needed in order to complete the task (to solve the information problem)

What do you need to know?

What questions do you need to answer in your research?

- Make a simple outline

Here's a sample outline for a project on Fun Activities

- I. Indoors
 - A. Music
 - 1. Playing the piano
 - 2. Listening to records
 - B. Reading
 - 1. Books
 - 2. Magazines
- II. Outdoors
 - A. Sports
 - 1. Softball
 - 2. Water Skiing
 - B. Bird Watching

2. Information Seeking Strategies

- Determine the range of possible sources (brainstorm)
- Evaluate the different possible sources to determine priorities (select the best sources)

Possible Information Sources

- Periodicals
- Encyclopedia
- Books
- Software
- Pamphlets
- People
- Internet/World Wide Web
- GALILEO Databases
- Audiovisual materials (laser discs, video, audio tapes)

Suggested research websites

- www.awesomelibrary.org
- www.kidsclick.org/ksearch.html
- www.bartleby.com
- www.kidport.com (click on search)
- www.galileo.usg.edu (ask media specialist for home use password)
- www.encyclopedia.com
- www.magportal.com

3. Location and Access

- Locate sources
- Gather information needed to give credit to sources in the bibliography
- Find information within sources
 - Be sure to determine quality of information sources before taking notes.

CARS Checklist for Information Quality

(Adapted from Professor Robert Harris)

- **C** – Credibility
- **A** – Accuracy
- **R** – Reasonableness
- **S** – Support

4. Use of information

- Engage (read, hear, view,) the information in a source
- Extract relevant information from a source by skimming and taking notes
 - Avoid copying entire sentences
 - Paraphrase or summarize information

5. Synthesis

- Organize information from multiple sources and complete your outline
- Present the information through a written paper or a multimedia project
- Be sure to cite your sources correctly to avoid plagiarism
- Use www.easybib.com to correctly cite your sources

6. Evaluation

- Judge the product (effectiveness)
- Judge the information problem-solving process (efficiency)