

The Research Process

“My Sources”

Learn more about this topic! Each section gives more detail on one of the lyrics from the song. Read each section, and then respond by answering the question or taking notes on key ideas.

1. Starting any research project can feel a little overwhelming, but here’s a breakdown of what you can do:

1. Determine your topic (not too narrow and not too broad)
2. Get to know more about it (read an overview)
3. Select a variety of sources (ask your teacher how many you’ll need)
4. Take notes and organize them
5. Write your paper
6. Write a bibliography

Notes

2. When you choose a topic that’s meaningful to you, one that you really care about, the rest of the process will come more easily. Remember, you might be working on this project for a while, so it pays to be inspired, motivated and passionate about your topic.

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Pre-search is all about getting to know your topic a little better. You can read an article from an encyclopedia to get an overview of the topic or you can ask your librarian for help in getting started.

More ways to get to know your topic:

- a. If your subject is a “thing,” (event, animal, idea, etc.), find out the who, what, when, where and why
- b. If your subject is a “person,” find out about their early life, education, accomplishments and later life

3. Check with your teacher to see how many sources you need. You'll want a variety of sources for your topic: books, encyclopedias, and online or print articles from newspapers, magazines and journals. You can also use sources like films, videos, photos, etc.

Sources are classified into two categories:

1. **Primary sources** are documents from the period or subject you're studying, including diaries, journals, letters and interviews
2. **Secondary sources** are about the subject you're studying, including books, textbooks, articles and encyclopedias

Be careful when selecting your internet sources. You can't believe everything you read and it's important to find credible sources.

Encyclopedias, academic institutions and government agencies generally have the most reliable information. You can ask your librarian for help in determining the best websites.

Read through your sources and take accurate notes. Keep track of which notes came from which source, then organize your notes in a logical order.

4. Whenever using material from one of your sources, you must cite the source using footnotes or in-text citation so the reader knows where you're getting your information and knows that you aren't just making it up. There are different formats for citing texts, including APA, MLA and Chicago, so ask your teacher which one they prefer.

A bibliography is a list of all the sources you used in your paper. It gives proper credit to the authors whose ideas you used. Remember, you don't want to claim an idea that isn't yours! Bibliographies let the reader know where they can find the information you cited and are written according to certain style guidelines that match your citations.

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