



Grand Island High School

Library Media Center

Completing the Research Process using the Big 6

The following six steps outline a simple and effective strategy for finding information for a research paper and documenting the sources you find. Depending on your topic and your familiarity with the library, you may need to rearrange or recycle these steps. Adapt this outline to your needs.

STEP 1: TASK DEFINITION

What is the problem you are trying to solve? State your topic as a question. For example, if you are interested in finding out about use of alcoholic beverages by college students, you might pose the question, "What effect does use of alcoholic beverages have on the health of students?" What information will you need to answer the question? Identify the main concepts or keywords in your question.

Write a list of questions to which you need to find answers:

- * _____
- * _____
- * _____
- * _____
- * _____

STEP 2: INFORMATION SEEKING STRATEGIES

Brainstorm a list of possible sources of information. Consider different types of sources: print, Web sites, and databases.

Make a list here:

- * _____
- * _____

STEP 3: LOCATION AND ACCESS

Locate the sources and access the information within the sources.

Search the OPAC to find books and media: <http://168.169.14.50/>

- Use keyword searching for a narrow or complex search topic. Use subject searching for a broad subject. Print or write down the citation (author, title, etc.) and the location information (call number). Note the circulation status. When you pull the book from the shelf, scan the bibliography for additional sources. To create a booklist for yourself you should search the OPAC using your keywords, and then look at the list that pops up. To add books that you would like to use for your research to a printable list you should click on the "add to my bookbag" button under each book you are interested in. Once you have found all of the books you would like to see click on the "my bookbag" button and then hit print.

Use databases and the periodical rack to find journal articles.

- Find periodical articles by the article author, title, or keyword by looking at the online databases we subscribe to. Make sure you have the passwords to access the databases. List two databases that you feel would be helpful to you:

Find Internet Resources

- Use search engines to locate materials on the Web. Remember to evaluate them to determine if they are relevant and accurate. Check out this website (<http://school.discovery.com/schrockguide/eval.html>) for suggestions on evaluating the authority and quality of websites.

STEP 4: USE OF INFORMATION

Read, view, or listen to the source to find relevant information. Record and organize this information by taking notes or making an outline.

Remember that you will need to cite all the information you have found using the APA format. Locate and note the information that will be needed to create the citations. Citing or documenting the sources used in your research serves two purposes, it gives proper credit to the authors of the materials used, and it allows those who are reading your work to duplicate your research and locate the sources that you have listed as references. Knowingly representing the work of others as your own is plagiarism. Use Noodletools to assist you with note taking, in text citations and your reference page!

STEP 5: SYNTHESIS

This is where you go through the writing process. Take notes, write a rough draft, ask a friend to switch papers with you and do a peer evaluation of each other's work, make revisions, edit any grammar or spelling errors and create a final copy. Integrate all relevant information into the final product. Remember to cite all sources and create a reference list using Noodle Tools. Follow any instructions for submitting the paper to Turnitin.com.

STEP 6: EVALUATION

Evaluate your finished product:

- Is your final paper a thoughtful response to the assignment?
- Does your final paper represent your ideas and conclusions?
- Is your paper more than just a summary of other people's ideas?
- If you paraphrased or summarized information found in books or magazines, on the internet, or from other people, did you cite the source using in text citations?
- Did you give credit to all of your sources in an APA reference page?
- Did you do everything required for the assignment?
- Is your paper complete and does it include a title page with proper heading information?
- If your teacher requests these, did you include your notes, copies of each draft, an outline and an annotated bibliography?
- Would you be proud for anyone to read this paper?
- Do you understand each step of the Big 6 and the writing process? If not, who can you ask for help?