

Goal • Increase your ability to find and use scientific information and refer to sources.

What to Do

- Use the checklist below to help you search for information during a scientific inquiry.
- Share approaches, ideas, or obstacles with a classmate or friend.

Checklist

1. Make the assignment manageable.

_____ Plan how much time you need to:

- research the assignment
- prepare the presentation of your findings and conclusions by the assigned due date.

_____ Decide how much research you can do in the time you have available.

_____ Make sure your topic can be covered well in the time you have available. If not, consider narrowing your topic to something you can cover.

_____ Think about a suitable approach for communicating your topic. Will you use a chronological narrative, persuasive report, or some other method? Look for a technique you can develop in the time allowed.

2. Consider your current state of knowledge on the topic, and how to get additional knowledge.

_____ List key words for what you already know about this topic. Use a written list, a concept map, flow chart, or other organizer to arrange your key words.

_____ List gaps in your knowledge for which you need to find information.

_____ Use your key words to search for information in the library, in book indexes, on the Internet, and anywhere else you think you can find information on your topic.

3. Research your topic, and record the information you find.

_____ When reading or listening to information, decide if the source is authoritative and objective and if the information is factual or opinionated. Record your conclusions.

_____ Keep detailed notes of information you find, including calculations, diagrams, and the full reference for each source. Get copies of complex diagrams or pictures.

_____ Keep a record of your research process and methods, including interviews, Internet searches, library research, personal observations, and other methods.

_____ Decide how you want to refer to information in your presentation.

4. Prepare to communicate your findings.

_____ What method will you use? Informal or formal written report, computer slide presentation, oral report with multi-media aids or some other method. During the course, try to use different techniques.

_____ Check your presentation for factual accuracy, grammar, spelling, and proper reference to sources.

_____ For oral reports, practise making effective use of gestures and multi-media aids.



5. Think ahead to the next project by assessing what you did well and how you can improve.
- _____ Keep track of methods and information sources that worked well for you.
 - _____ Think of ways you could have handled each research step more effectively.
 - _____ List some strategies for doing better at your next scientific research assignment.
 - _____ Check these ideas before starting your next assignment.

