Information Skills and Research Manual

With thanks to Gwen Gawith Information Alive! Longman Paul, Auckland, 1987
Compiled by Sue Egan and Paul Ryan
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Spelling

Strategies to use when you do not know how to spell a word:

1. "Have a go" "How do you think it should be spelt?" By writing it out you can sometimes see if it looks right.

2. Ask the teacher 'to start you off.'

3. Create word lists or a glossary from the topic or subject you are studying. Put all the new words in a list and learn how to spell them and find out what they mean.

4. Create a word dictionary for spelling. Use the start of your student diary (i.e. days in January). To record the words that you have spelt incorrectly in any piece of work as it is corrected, or record new words that you would like to spell accurately.

5. Use the method you learnt in primary school to check your spelling:

   Look    Say    Cover    Write    Check

Look at the new word you are trying to spell

Say it out loud

Cover the word, then

Write it, then Check against the correct spelling
Information Skills

1. DEFINE
What do I really want to find out?
Why do I need to find this out?
What are the key words and ideas of the task?
What do I need to do/ what am I expected to do?
What do I already know?
How much time have I got?

2. LOCATE / FIND
What do I still need to find out?
What sources and equipment can I use?
How do I use those sources?
Who can suggest other sources?

3. SELECT
What information do I really need to use?
What information can I leave out?
How useful is this source?
How relevant is the information I have found?
How will I record the information I need?
How credible is the information I have found?

4. ORGANISE / RECORD
How can I best use this information?
Have I enough information for my purpose?
Do I need to use all this information?
How can I best combine information from different sources?
5. PRESENT

How can I or how should I present this information?
Who/what is my audience?
What format is required/appropriate?
What resources will I use to make my presentation?

6. ASSESS

What did I learn from this?
Did I fulfil my purpose/meet the criteria?
How did I go with each step of the process?
Where do I go from here?
What would I do differently next time?
Title of My Project: _____________________________________________

How are you going to present your information?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

✓ Do I know exactly what I need to know?
✓ Do I know what I am expected to produce?
✓ Do I know how much time I’ve got?
✓ Do I know exactly what I am going to do?
✓ Have I worked out what I already know?
✓ Can I think about it graphically? Map it?
✓ Can I identify key concepts, approaches and terms?
MINDMAP YOUR PLANNING USING THE BIG 6
Develop a Mind Map of things relating to the topic you will be investigating

List some of the questions you will keep in mind when you use your resources:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
PLANNING YOUR TIME

How much time do you have? _________________________________

When will you plan your research? By lesson ______ / Date: ______
When will you find your information? By lesson ______ / Date: ______
When will you select your information? By lesson ______ / Date: ______
When will you organise your information? By lesson ______ / Date: ______
When will you present your information? By lesson ______ / Date: ______
When will you evaluate your information? By lesson ______ / Date: ______
LOCATE

What kind of information will you need?

- Facts
- Opinions
- Pictures
- Diagrams
- Maps
- People’s experience
- Events – past, present, future
- Other

**LEVEL 1: LIKELY SOURCES OF INFORMATION CHECKLIST**

People: ______________________________________________________

Organisations/business etc: _______________________________________

Libraries: ______________________________________________________

Other sources: _________________________________________________
LEVEL 2 LIKELY RESOURCES CHECKLIST

Print:
- Reference books (atlas, encyclopaedias, dictionaries, etc)
- Books
- Magazines/periodicals/Newsbank
- Current Social and Environmental Issues

Non-Print:
- Posters/charts/maps
- Powerpoint Presentations
- DVD’s
- Slides
- CD’s/MP3/Podcasts
- Clickview
- Reliable and Accurate websites

LEVEL3: KEYS TO FINDING THESE RESOURCES CHECKLIST

- Catalogue (subject index)
- Indexed (encyclopaedias, periodical, book)
- Content lists, headings
- Information file
- Booklist, bibliographies
- Telephone directory, yellow pages
- Suggestions from teacher/librarian

INFORMATION CHECK
Before you begin researching in depth, look at the materials that you have retrieved. Compare this information in the different resources, asking:

- Does it look the right **level**? Can you read it, understand it?  Yes / No
- Does it look like the **kind** of information that you want  Yes / No
- Is it **up to date**?  Yes / No
- If you need them, are there **pictures, diagrams or maps**?  Yes / No
- Have you got a **variety** of information so that you can compare and contrast.  Yes / No
- Keep your resource plan in mind. Are the resources OK or do you need to find more before you start serious work on your research? Yes / No
SELECT & USE

✓ What information do I really need to use?
✓ What information can I leave out?
✓ How useful is this source?
✓ How relevant is the information I have found?
✓ How will I record the information I need?
✓ How credible is the information I have found?

SELECTING / USING THE INFORMATION CHECKLIST

List if the resources you have used:

Author ______________________ Date of publication: _____________

Title __________________________________________________________

Internet address or Dewey number ________________________________

Author ______________________ Date of publication: _____________

Title __________________________________________________________

Internet address or Dewey number __________________________________

Author ______________________ Date of publication: _____________

Title __________________________________________________________

Internet address or Dewey number __________________________________
RESOURCES CHECKLIST

Did you start by looking at the whole resource? Yes / No
   ▪ Looking at the contents page, chapter headings, index? Yes / No
   ▪ Looking at the pictures, diagrams, captions? Yes / No

Did you scan likely looking sections with your mental map in mind? Yes / No

Looking for key words, key ideas? Yes / No

Did you skim read/look/listen keeping key words and key details in mind? Yes / No

Did you find sections that look relevant? Yes / No

Have you tried reading or looking at, or listening to relevant sections in more depth by concentrating on the questions you listed in Stage 1? Yes / No

Were you asking “What does this material tell me about what I need to know?” Yes / No

Were you keeping an eye on whether it was fact, biased, propaganda, opinion? Yes / No

Are you trying to compare, contrast, group ideas, relate the new information to what you knew already and what you diagrammed on your mind map? Yes / No
ORGANISE

- How can I best use this information?
- Have I enough information for my purpose?
- Do I need to use all this information?
- How can I best combine information from different sources?

notemaking...

does two things

There are three main techniques:

- layout
- punctuation
- notation

These are techniques for written notes but even if you record your information with a camera or tape recorder, you still need to make a note of what you’ve recorded and organize it so that you can retrieve the exact information again. It is a good idea to make notes on separate pieces of paper or cards. Give them headings (indexing) and then file them using these headings (see below).

1. USING LAYOUT, COLOUR, TYPE, DESIGN
   - columns
   - white space
   - wide margins
   - bullets
   - highlighting
   - arrows
   - indentations

2. USING PUNCTUATION, like
   - dots
   - dashes
   - slashes
   - asterisks
   - capitals
   - underlining

3. USING NOTATION, like
   1. numbers
   2. alphabetical
   3. both

   a.
   b.
   c.
   d.

ENVIRONMENTAL
NUCLEAR WASTE

POLLUTION - AIR
NATIONAL PARK

POLLUTION - Atmosphere
NATIONAL PARK

POLLUTION - SEA
NATIONAL PARK

WASTE DISPOSAL
See also Nuclear Waste
NOTEMAKING WORKSHEET
(Use one for each resource that you use)

Author __________________________ Date of publication: ____________
Title ____________________________________________________________________________
Internet address or Dewey number ____________________________________________

Main idea / topic / ideas

Supporting evidence /data /opinion

Main idea/ topics/ ideas

Supporting evidence /data/ opinion
NOTEMAKING WORKSHEET
(Use one for each resource that you use)

Author __________________________ Date of publication: ____________
Title ___________________________________________________________________
Internet address or Dewey number _______________________________________

Main idea / topics / ideas

Supporting evidence / data / opinion

                    _____________________
________________________________________________________________________
                    _____________________
________________________________________________________________________
                    _____________________
________________________________________________________________________

Main idea / topics / ideas

Supporting evidence / data / opinion

                    _____________________
________________________________________________________________________
                    _____________________
________________________________________________________________________
                    _____________________
________________________________________________________________________
PRESENT

✓ How can I or how should I present this information?
✓ Who/what is my audience?
✓ What format is required/appropriate?
✓ What resources will I use to make my presentation?

Introduction (A brief description of what your topic is, how you will cover it, the main points you will make)

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

What are the most important points that you would like to make/conclusions/findings? (Support with evidence from your research.)

Point
1 __________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Point
2 __________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Point 3

Point 4

Point 5

WHY? ________________________________________________

WHEN? WHERE? WITH WHOM? ________________________________________________

HOW? ________________________________________________________

WITH WHAT RESULT? __________________________________________
CONCLUSION?

HOW WILL YOU PRESENT YOUR LEARNING?

Method of presentation:

Things to collect / organise:

- essay
- report
- article
- newspaper
- letter to ...
- written interview
- diary
- press release
- advert
- brochure
- poem
- ballad
- talk
- oral report
- song
- debate
- court trial
- oral interview
- panel discussion
- taped report
- interview
- slides
- photos
- video
- radio bulletins
- display
- photomontage
- collage
- scrap book
- sketches
- diagrams
- maps
- charts
- posters
- dioramas
- graphs
- pie charts
- OHT
- flat & rolls
- model
- mobile
- mural
- computer database
- program surveys
- program crit sheets
- Games
- plays/drama
- Simulated TV (with OHT)
- Quiz
- talk-back show
ASSESS

ASSESS

What did I learn from this?
Did I fulfil my purpose/meet the criteria?
How did I go with each step of the process?
Where do I go from here?
What would I do differently next time?

After this research, how do you feel about yourself as a researcher?(Mark your position on the scale 1= need more work – 10 = I am managing research really well)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

EVALUATION OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS

STAGE 1: IDENTIFY INFORMATION NEED AND PURPOSE

What did you find easy/difficult about:

1. Deciding what you needed to know?
   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________

2. What you were going to produce?
   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________
3. What you already knew?
____________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________

4. How to map it?
____________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________

STAGE 2: IDENTIFYING A VARIETY OF INFORMATION SOURCES AND RESOURCES

- What did you find difficult?
- Deciding on sources?
- Locating the resources?
- Locating the information in the resources using catalogues, indexes, etc
- Were there enough resources?
- Were the resources at the right level?
____________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________
Stage 3: Identifying, locating and analysing information in the resources
Tick the following that you found difficult:

- Reading, looking, listening, interviewing with purpose?
- Questioning using ‘W’ questions?
- Analysing, comparing, collating information under major headings?
- Distinguishing bias, propaganda, prejudice, fact, opinion?

Stage 4: Recording and organising the relevant information

Tick the following that you found difficult:

- Using note-making techniques (layout, punctuation, notation)?
- Working out what was important enough to record?
- Using an efficient method of recording eg, notes instead of photos.

Stage 5: Presenting the information

Tick the following that relate to you:

- Trying to do too much, getting carried away?
- Not understanding enough about the form of the presentation and not asking ‘What am I doing, for whom?’
Writing Style Manual

Sentences

Begin with a capital letter. Make them easy to understand. Your work will be more interesting if sentences vary in length. Sentences break up your writing and give time for a pause. Read your work aloud to make sure you have put full stops or commas where your voice pauses, e.g.:

Without using full stops and commas
I stopped the boat and let dad out without a word he rushes over to the edge and looks into the boat 'see if he's alive' says dad 'i'll get some water'

Using full stops and commas
I stopped the boat and let Dad out. Without a word he rushes over to the edge and looks into the boat. 'See if he's alive,' says Dad. 'I'll get some water.'

Paragraphs

The first paragraph explains your topic, e.g.:

“Monkeys have bare bums. This is due to... “

Following paragraphs form links using a topic (first) sentence to organise the flow of your main idea.

Paragraphs help organise your work. You use a paragraph in your writing when there is:

- A change of event
- A change of time
- A change of topic
- Quoting from a book

   e.g.: “Woke up at 6.00 a.m. in the morning. Got out of bed carefully because the dog was spread-eagled across my bed, flat on its back, with its legs in the air. At first I thought it was dead, but I checked its pulse and found signs of life.”

   “After measuring my chest and shoulders I had a thorough wash in cold water. I read somewhere that cold water makes a man of you.”

   From ‘The Diary of Adnian Mole.”
Capitals

Use capitals for:
- Start of a sentence
- Personal names
- Names of nationalities, people and languages
- Holidays, Holy Days and ceremonies
- Leaders of countries, religions and companies.
- Names of organisations
- Names of places

Presentation

Your final copy should be set out so that it is clear and contains all the necessary information and is pleasing to look at.

Name: Jody Jones
Class: 7C

Topic

Sub - Headings

Sub - Headings
There should be a 3 cm margin around your research page

Some other ways of presenting research information

- in an exercise book
- on computer using different applications
- large sheets of paper/cardboard
- photo album
- fold out or pop-up book
- a scroll
- digital pictures
- mural
- stapled sheets
- a mobile
- model with script to explain
- published book
- published book and audio tape
- published CD or DVD
- clay tablet
- shadow box or diorama (with summary information to go with it)
- oral report
- board game
- travelogue or travel diary
- set of instructions or guidelines
- time-line or flow chart
- historical fiction
autobiographical sketches – e.g. a butterfly gives an account of its short life
a 'How to…' book, brochure
a class or individual newspaper / magazine
a script for a radio play or video presentation
a field guide
a column or feature article
any others that you can think of!