

Toolbox for students

Tool 4: Researching in libraries

In libraries you can find lots of information that you need when researching a topic. In order to be able to use this information you need to be able to pick out the most relevant bits. The following checklist can help you to find information (research).

1. What is my goal?

- What am I creating? What should the final product look like? Should it be a presentation? A report? A poster?
- You will need to look for different types of information depending on what the goal of your work is. To make a poster, you have to find pictures you can cut out; for a report you need to find exact information about a topic.

2. What information do I need?

- Write down everything that you know about the topic (a mind map can help you with this).
- Write down everything that you'd like to know about the topic (highlight points on your mind map). Define precisely what aspect of the topic you would like to learn about. Depending on what your final product will be, you may need to define a lot of aspects or only a few.

3. How do I find information and how do I organise it?

- Look through the books, magazines, films, etc., that you have found in the library and decide if they can answer the questions you asked. Looking through the index or the tables of contents can help.
- On a separate sheet of paper, note down the title of the book and the page number where you found the information. You can also mark the page with a bookmark or Post-it note.
- It can often be useful to photocopy the page. However, don't forget to note down the title of the book on the copy.
- Look at the pictures from magazines. Photocopy them or mark the page with a bookmark.
- If using a film, watch the film and stop it each time something interesting is described.
- Gather the materials and put them all together in a plastic folder.
- Highlight the most important information.
- In your own words, write down the most important information about a topic on a sheet of paper.

4. How do I present the information?

You can, for example:

- make a poster;
- hold an exhibition;
- give a speech;
- create a transparency;
- write a newspaper article;
- show video clips.

5. How do I evaluate my research?

- Did you learn anything new?
- Did you find enough useful information?
- Which steps in your research went well? What was difficult?
- What would you do differently next time?