The Research Process

1. Develop a Research Question

2. Plan Search Strategies

3. Locate & Access Information

4. Explore, Evaluate, & Extract

5. Organize & Present

6. Rewrite & Cite

Step 1: Develop a research question. Choose a topic or issue and develop a question that is neither too broad or too narrow. A topic serves as an informative research basis, while an issue is a topic on which you can take a stand. Conducting some preliminary research can help you refine your research question. Instagrok is a good place to start for a general overview of your topic. It suggests possible subtopics and shows how they are related to the primary search query.

Step 2: Plan search strategies. Think about what types of information you'll need and where you'll find that information. Do you need news sources? Biographies of people? You also need to brainstorm a list of keywords that you'll use to search. Decide which keywords or phrases will be most effective and determine any topics that may appear in searches but are not related to your topic.

Step 3: Locate & access information. Start locating the information you need. What books and databases will have the information you need? Think about how you'll find information within sources as well. Does the book have a table of contents or index you can use? Get organized so you can get use all of the sources in once place all at one time. If some of your information involves multimedia materials or personal interviews for primary sources, plan how you will arrange access to that content.

Step 4: Explore, evaluate, & extract. As you explore each resource, evaluate the information to make sure it is credible, useful, and helps answer your research question. Extract and record summaries and key points from the research in each of your sources, remembering to track citation information. Take careful and effective notes from all databases, print and multimedia resources, and any personal interviews, making sure to address all aspects of your research question.

Step 5: Organize & present information. Create a clear outline of your research paper or presentation. Decide which research notes match best with the pieces of your paper. Once your information is well organized, write a first draft. Conference with your teacher for feedback on your research process.

Step 6: Rewrite & cite. Based on your own editing and review, and feedback from your instructor, rewrite until you are prepared to submit a final draft. From your research notes, create a bibliography following the guidelines for the specific project.

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