

AwesomeStories is the place where you can find many primary sources and lots of different media (videos, audios, images, animations, maps, graphs, drawings and works-of-art) to help students better understand the topic-at-hand. We fold all of those sources and media into a story which supports the curriculum.

A book gives us a great place to start, but books are limited (since they don't include audio and moving-visual components). The additional media options help to hold a person's attention and contribute to a deeper understanding of the subject.

At AwesomeStories, every piece of source material is hand-curated, then positioned—in context—at the place where it has the most meaning (and, hopefully, does the most good). Learn how it all works in this tutorial on "The Research Process."

The Research Process—How to Use Informational Sources

Information Overload?

You want to find out about a certain topic, or you need information to complete an assignment. You need to research your topic, but—with so many resources available—you might ask yourself:

Where do I start?!?

Don't Despair!

Approaching a research project can be managed if you follow a planned strategy. Researching information is a skill you will use your entire life, both in your career and your personal life. Those who know how to mine relevant information will have a valuable asset for both the workplace and the home.

STEP 1: Clearly identify what you need to research:

- Do you have a clear understanding of the assignment or topic?
- What information will you need?
- Brainstorm questions you have about your topic.
- Talk it over with others and share ideas with them.
- Write down the overall concept or "Big Idea" of your task.

THINK ABOUT THIS:

If your topic is one that is controversial, look at both sides of the topic and represent both sides in your report (even if you slant your report to one side or the other).

Do viewpoints differ on the information you're researching? Even historical facts can be interpreted by different people in different ways.

STEP 2: Strategies for Finding Information

What are the best sources of information?

- AwesomeStories gives you access to over 100 libraries of reliable primary sources.
- Primary-source materials are original documents and objects that are created by firsthand experience. They represent a wealth of information regarding firsthand accounts.
- Secondary sources are interpretations of events and topics by others without firsthand experience. They might be incorrect or biased.

STEP 3: Use the Information

- After you locate the information you need, you have to really understand what the information says (or hints about). Can you find other sources, about the topic, which support the evidence?
- Photographs, videos and documents are important pieces of research. Embedding them in your report will

make your writing more relevant and engaging to the reader.

STEP 4: Mine the Mountain of Information for what You Need

- What sources are relevant to your research?
- What is useful, interesting, surprising or different from what you expected to find about your topic? Take notes.
- Don't forget to capture photos, videos, documents or graphics that will enhance your final product.
- You'll need to cite where you found information that you're using, so don't forget to capture all the data you need to give proper credit.

STEP 5: Organizing Information

- You will need to organize the information you have mined from many different sources.
- Sometimes, outlining your report will help you to unify your source materials and give you a clear direction as you begin to write your research report.
- Start thinking of attention-grabbing ways to present your information. Capture your reader's curiosity by organizing your report for maximum impact.

STEP 6: Write Your Research Report

- Think about this: Sometimes "the story behind the story" gives insight to the story itself.
- Telling "when, where, how, why or what" helps to pull the pertinent information together. Using StoryMaker, at AwesomeStories, will make this easy for you.
- Write a captivating introduction (preface) and an equally intriguing conclusion to your report.
- Don't be afraid to give your opinion if your opinion is based on the facts you have uncovered in your research.

STEP 7: Evaluate Your Work

- Judge your finished work.
- Did you do what was required?
- Did you review and correct spelling and/or grammatical errors?
- Does your report make logical sense?
- Does it flow from page to page?
- Did you cite your sources?
- Did you add images or video to enhance your story?

And ... You're Finished!

Research—and writing research reports—can not only be a learning experience, it can also be an adventure into the unknown: uncovering secrets, hidden accounts, forgotten relevant people or overlooked photos or

documents. This is where it gets fun!

As Trudi Canavan, a best-selling author, says:

Inspiration comes from so many sources. Music, fiction or non-fiction I read, TV shows, films, news reports, people I know, stories I hear, misheard words or lyrics, dreams... Motivation? The rush I get from a really good writing session and knowing I did my best.

Good Luck with your research-and-writing projects!

Credits:

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See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/The-Research-Process>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/The-Research-Process>