

How to develop research skills

The following step by step guide is a suggestion of how to start research and develop it for the independent research project. It is very important to keep an organised record of resources used in order to make the most of them. A research portfolio will allow for this and therefore encourage independent learning; this will result in a more personalised and meaningful learning experience.

STEP BY STEP GUIDE	DONE	CHECKED
<p>CHOOSE AN AREA OF STUDY: What area of study interests you most?</p> <p>Do some background reading in both your first language and the target language to find out what you would be more interested in learning about.</p>		
<p>CHOOSE A TOPIC WITHIN THIS AREA: What would you like to know more about?</p> <p>Write a list of possible topics, present them to your class / teacher and discuss which ones would be more appropriate for your study. Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Relevance to the target language society ✓ How easy it is to find and access resources on this topic ✓ Opportunities for developing ideas 		
<p>WRITE SOME BASIC QUESTIONS ON THE TOPIC YOU CHOSE: What do you want to find out about this topic?</p> <p>Use some of these question words/phrases to get you started:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ what, when, who, define, distinguish, identify, list, name, recall, reorganise, ✓ show, state, write, which, indicate, tell how ✓ compare, conclude, contrast, demonstrate, predict, which, distinguish, estimate, ✓ explain, rephrase, inform, give an example of, hypothesise, illustrate, relate, tell in your own words ✓ how would, demonstrate, choose, indicate 		
<p>CHOOSE YOUR SOURCES AND START GATHERING INFORMATION IN THE TARGET LANGUAGE: Where can you find enough information to help you find out more?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Once you have identified the sources you are going to use, photocopy or print out the texts so you can read them, highlight key points and annotate the new vocabulary. 2 Identify quotes, facts and statistics that you could use later. 3 Don't forget to reference the sources so you don't waste time trying to find the same resource and also in order to use these references in your work if appropriate. 		
<p>IDENTIFY KEY POINTS AND ORGANISE THEM: What have you learned about your chosen topic?</p> <p>Create a mind map with the main key points and organise the information you have gathered into the categories you have identified.</p>		



<p>WRITE SOME MORE COMPLEX QUESTIONS ABOUT EACH KEY POINT: How can you use all your research to show your evaluation and analysis skills?</p> <p>Use some of the following phrases to get you started; they should help you to formulate higher level questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• analyse, categorise, describe, classify, compare, discriminate, distinguish, recognise, support, relate, explain.• suggest, how, develop, what conclusion, plan, formulate a solution, summarise.• what is, choose, evaluate, decide, judge, select, which would you consider, defend, what is most appropriate.		
<p>ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE: What evidence have you got? What do you think? What conclusions could you draw?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1 Use cards, a mind map or a PowerPoint presentation to answer each question.2 Use quotes, facts, statistics and examples.3 Reference your sources clearly. <p>Remember, in the Speaking exam, you will need to take the lead in your discussions and ask questions to your teacher/examiner during the presentation.</p>		