

Step-by-Step Research Checklist: Grades 6-12

1. Develop a topic

- Ask questions to formulate information needs
- Select/modify keywords to investigate topic
- Draft a statement of purpose for research

2. Locate resources

- Use the library's online Public Access Catalog (PAC) to locate relevant resources
- Find information in a variety of formats: books, print and online encyclopedias and databases, web sites, periodicals, interviews, etc.

3. Select the most useful resources

- Match resources to information needs
- Know the difference between a *primary* and *secondary* source. Look for a primary source to make your research come alive (examples: photograph, speech, historic document)

4. Compile information and keep track of your sources

- Take notes targeted to your research questions, including summarizing, paraphrasing, and direct quotes
- Keep track of sources for each note, fact, or quote
- Cite sources as you use them to save time when you make a *Works Cited* list (bibliography)

5. Synthesize your research

- Choose an appropriate order or structure to present evidence
- Go back to your statement of purpose and draft a Thesis Statement

6. Share what you learned

- Use an appropriate medium to create a product or presentation that communicates results
- Make a Works Cited list for all resources used

7. Review your progress and product

- Use a self-evaluation tool (rubric, checklist, etc.) to track your progress and final product or performance

CPS Library Teachers can provide instruction and resources for each step!

A Research Glossary

Direct quote – Including actual spoken or written words exactly as they occurred, enclosed by quotation marks and attributed to the speaker or writer who used them.

Key words – Search terms used to help locate information needed in print and online resources.

Paraphrase – In note-taking, to restate or reword a passage read, often to make it clearer, briefer, or give meaning in another form.

Primary source – An original document (used in a quote, sound, or visual piece of a presentation) pertaining to an event or topic. Examples include the U.S. Constitution, interview, sound or video clip of a speech or performance, historical photograph, autobiography. Primary sources are valuable as *evidence* and to bring history to life.

PAC/Public Access Catalog – A database of print and audiovisual (AV) holdings in the Cambridge Public Schools' libraries. To find books or other materials, search by author, title, keyword, or subject, from school or home. The King Open PAC is found at: <http://library.cpsd.us/KingOpen/default.htm>

Secondary source – A document, article, book, etc. that describes an event, person, place or thing (biography, essay on “causes of the Civil War,” etc.)

Summarize – To present the substance of research results in a short form, reduced to main points.

Synthesize – Creating new ideas by linking to knowledge gained through research, interviews, observations, etc., and one's own personal ideas, then organizing them to present results.

Thesis statement – Main idea of a project; a strong statement that you can prove with evidence. The *angle* or *point of view* from which you present your material.

Works Cited – A list of all sources *used*, including print, online reference, and web sites, interviews, magazines, etc. Different from a *bibliography*, which provides the reader with sources they could read to learn more about the topic.