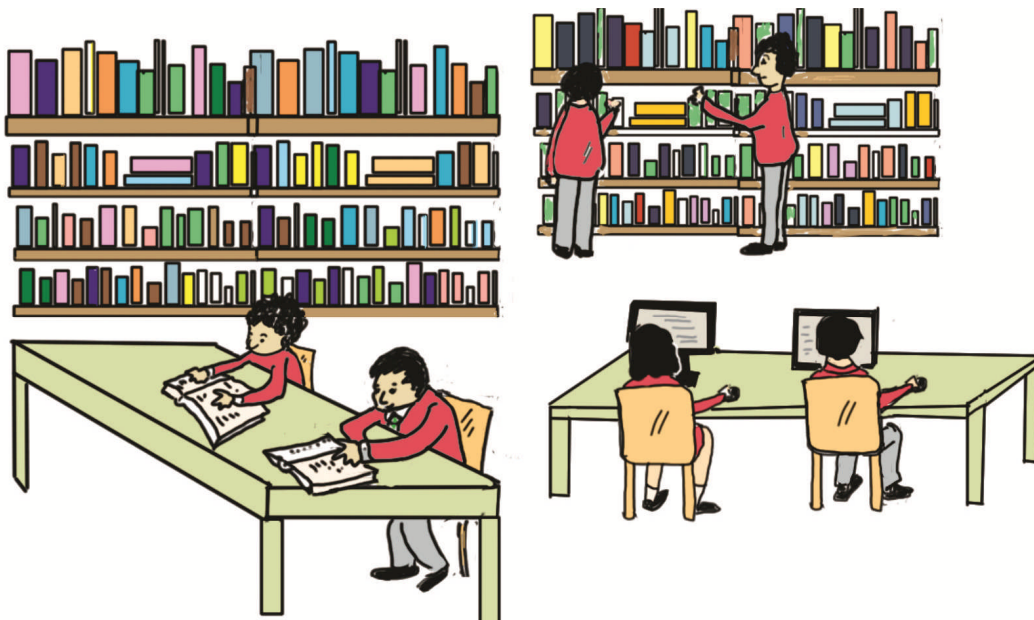




**Enhanced Learning
Educational Services**
“the study skills specialist”

RESEARCH SKILLS



Many tasks and assignments in high school will require you to research a topic then report back on what you learn. Save time by learning to streamline your research and quickly locate the information you need.

- You should read each point and **highlight the key phrases** in that point.
- Discuss with a friend or parent as you read through the handout.
- You may like to work through this over a number of sessions.

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1. TAKE THE TIME TO ANALYSE THE TASK BEFORE YOU START YOUR RESEARCH

Take the time to analyse the task and ensure you are clear on all aspects of the requirements.

- Do I understand the key words and language of the task?
- Am I clear on the objectives of the task?
- Do I know the marking or assessment criteria?
- Can I express the requirements of the task in my own words?
- What are my initial thoughts or ideas about the task?
- What do I already know about the subject matter?
- What ways could I approach this task?
- Who could I discuss my ideas with?
- Do I need to clarify any aspect of the task?
- What sources could I use to investigate further?



a. How long do you usually spend ensuring you are clear about what you have to do for the task? Do you ask for help early on if you need to?

2. CHOOSE YOUR RESEARCH APPROACH

OUTLINE APPROACH	BIG PICTURE APPROACH
<p>The outline approach is where you already have a bit of an idea about what you will write about: so you first decide an outline of what you will cover in your task, then research each aspect of your outline, so you can write each section.</p> <p><i>“write an outline and write to the outline”</i></p>	<p>The big picture approach is where you aren't sure what to include or what to write about in your assignment or essay: so you start researching and as you research you then start to develop a plan of what you will write about.</p> <p><i>“research and write lots and then cut back”</i></p>
<p>READING: Do some background reading to clarify the content you will include.</p>	<p>READ WIDELY: Read widely and take notes as you read, detailing the sources. Cast a wide net.</p>
<p>OUTLINE: Create an outline of the structure your research will follow. This gives you a clear path to follow in your writing.</p>	<p>DEVELOP PLAN: Let your plan and structure develop from brainstorming, mind maps, and by reviewing the information you have collected.</p>
<p>REVIEW: Review the resources in a methodical way, making notes carefully as per your outline and clearly detailing the sources.</p>	<p>INVESTIGATE: Let one reading lead to another. Make notes on what you are reading so you can come back to it again if you need to.</p>
<p>ANALYSE: Analyse the information as you go and write the draft of your essay or assignment as you research that section.</p>	<p>STRUCTURE: Once you have completed all your research, then develop a cohesive structure and outline from which to write.</p>

DISCUSS

b. Do you prefer the outline approach or big picture approach? Why? Does it vary with different tasks or subjects?

3. FINDING RESOURCES

- Try to use as many different types of sources as you can, including books, magazine articles, journals and Internet articles. Don't rely on just one source (like the Internet) for all your information.
- Keep a list of all the sources that you use. Include the title of the source, the author, page numbers, the publisher, and place and date of publication. This is your preliminary, or draft, bibliography.

Source	Primary Attribute	Advantage	Disadvantage
Books Texts	Comprehensive	Substantive	Information may be out of date, depending on the date of the book's publication.
Magazines Periodicals	Popular	Focused	Because of a limited amount of space, coverage is limited to only most current information.
Journal	Scholarly	Authoritative	Because of a limited amount of space, coverage is limited to only most current information.
Newspaper	Current	Broad in scope	Non-substantive
Internet	Accessible	Broad in scope	Possibly unreliable

USING LIBRARIES

NOTE: Unfortunately many students now go straight to the Internet and by-pass libraries altogether. Don't neglect your school library. If you give it a chance you'll be pleasantly surprised by what you will find there. Plus it is usually quicker than wading through the masses of unrelated information on the Net.



- **ASK THE LIBRARIAN:** Explore the resources available in your school or local public library. If you don't understand how to use a library, get a few of you together and ask your school librarian to give you a 5-10 minute rundown about the catalogue and the Dewey decimal system.
- **USE CATALOGUES:** Use the electronic catalogue or browse the library shelves to look for books on your topic. The more you can use relevant search terms and define your subject the more focused your list of resources will be.
- **CHECK BIBLIOGRAPHIES:** If you find a book that is useful, check the bibliography (list of sources) in the back of that book for other books or articles on that topic. By using this

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