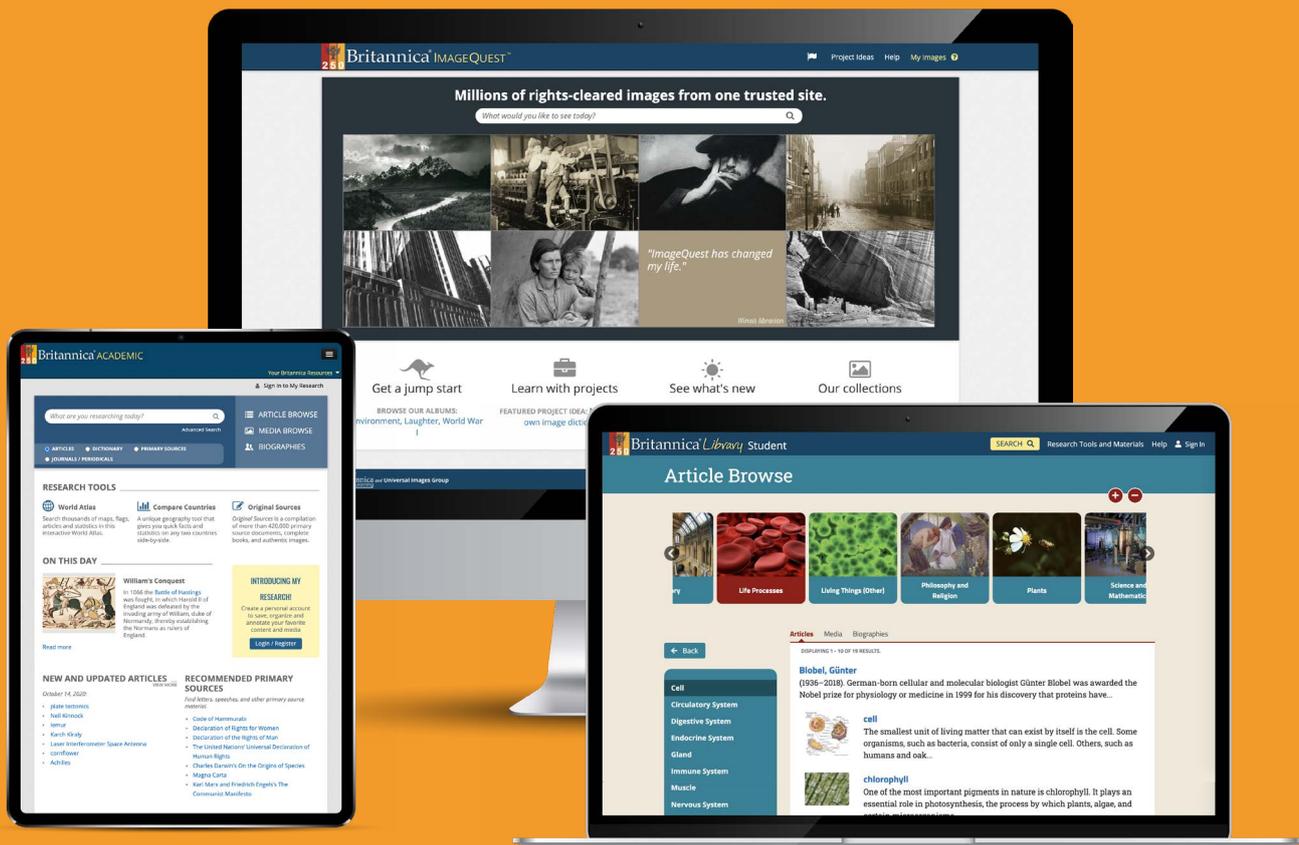


Britannica's Research Guide

FOR LEARNERS





You've been doing research nearly all of your life. Surprised? Let's think about it! Maybe you checked the internet to find the latest football results, or you looked up the biography of a musician you really like? Every time you put in key words for an internet search or looked up something in a book or magazine, you were doing **informal research!**

For a research project, you conduct **formal research**. This means using resources to answer a question, solve a problem, or find out something you want to know. You'll be like a detective, using your research skills to dig out the facts, organize them, and draw conclusions from them.

This guide presents a **five-step process** to get you from start to finish in your research. Once you learn these steps, you'll have a vital skill you can apply throughout your life.

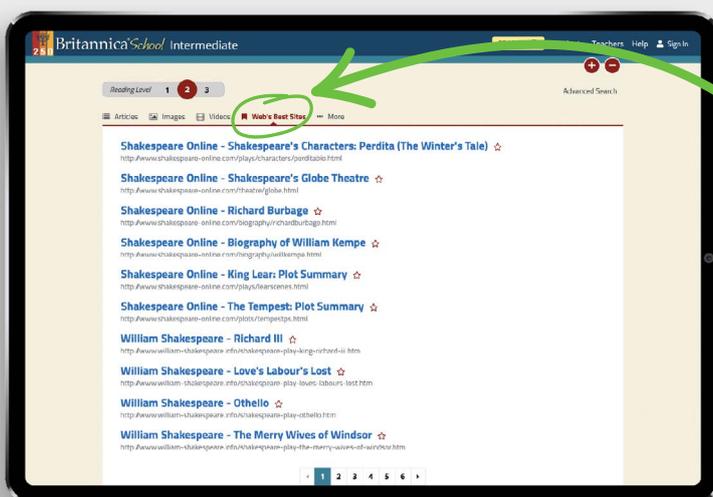
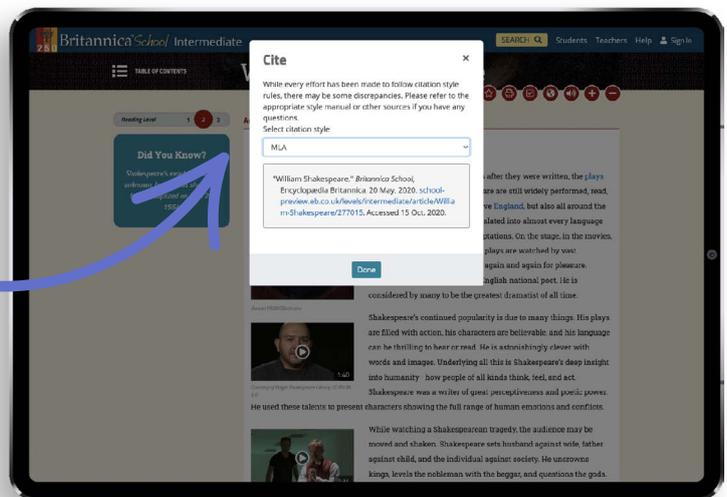
How can Britannica help you?

Britannica has a number of online learning resources that are trusted by teachers and pupils. The information with our research platforms is cross-curricular and multidisciplinary, updated daily, and spans a range of media. It minimises teacher workload and enhances media literacy skills by collating authoritative, unbiased, vetted, and differentiated resources around topics that correlate with their teaching and learning.



Britannica is a **safe and secure** platform where all information stored has been through a meticulous vetting process and is strictly for **education purposes**, containing **non-biased information**.

Britannica has a **citation tool** which allows individuals to identify where their information has come from.



Britannica provides a **'Web's Best Sites'** tool that allows people to explore the web using only **relevant and reliable sources** for their information.

Our Five- Step Guide

Below are Britannica's five steps to research. Each step will be covered in this guide!

1

Understand the project



2

**Select the topic and
plan the project**



3

Gather information



4

**Record and organise
facts**



5

Creating the final task



REPEAT!

1 Understand the project

Before you start, make sure you understand the basic requirements of the task you have been set. What information about the project have you been given so far? Taking this step will give you the big picture and help guide your research.

Choose the answer that fits your research task.

1. What will be the final presentation?

Written

Oral

Multimedia

Other _____

2. What is the purpose of the project?

Inform

Persuade

Entertain

Other _____

3. How many people are involved?

4. What is the minimum or maximum number of page/word count?

5. What types of resources will you need?

6. When is the project due?

2 Select the topic and plan the project

Before you start, make sure you understand the basic requirements of the task you have been set. What information about the project have you been given so far? Taking this step will give you the big picture and help guide your research.

- *Does the topic interest you?*
- *Is there enough information on the topic?*
- *Can you understand the information around this topic?*

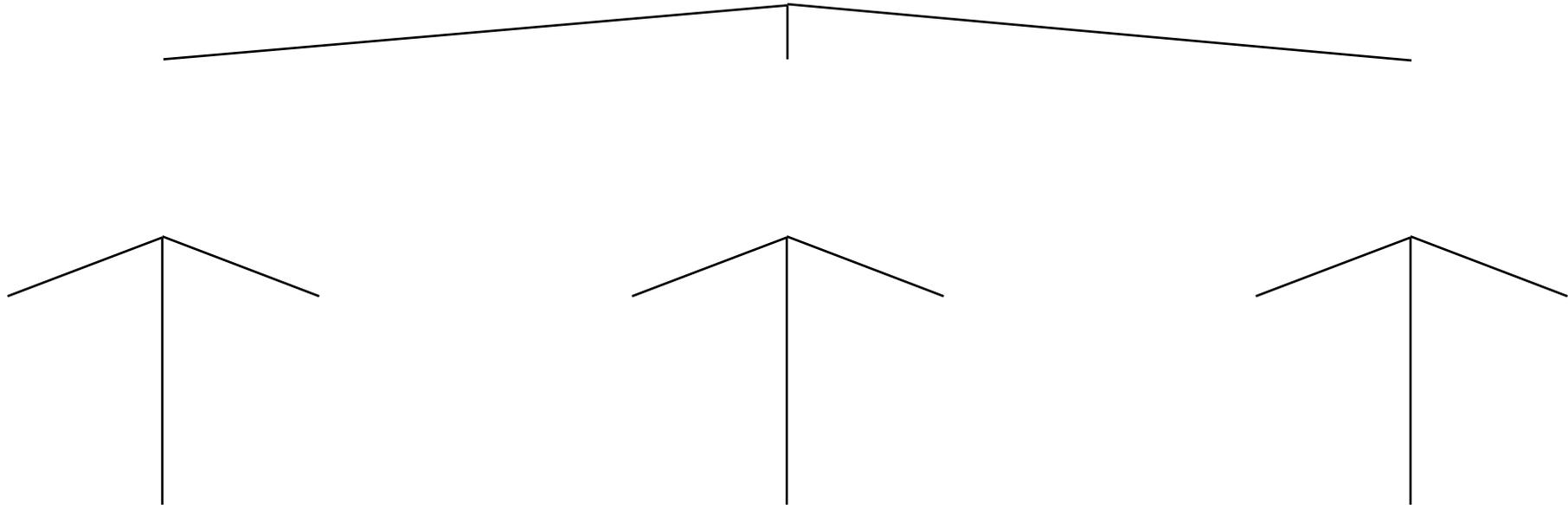
Whether you are assigned a topic or are selecting something independently, start by making a list of what you know about the topic. This will allow you to evaluate your current knowledge and plan what you need to learn.

WHAT I ALREADY KNOW	WHAT I NEED TO LEARN

2 Select the topic and plan the project

Information Web

Use the idea web below to help you think about and explore areas around your topic. Try to decide on at least two or three subtopics in relation to the main idea that you may want to research into.



3 Gather information

To complete research for your topic, you need to know:

- **The types of information you need: primary and secondary**
- **Where to find the information you want**
- **Which search terms to use in your hunt**
- **How to evaluate the information you find**

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY INFORMATION

Print, online, and video resources are divided into primary and secondary resources.

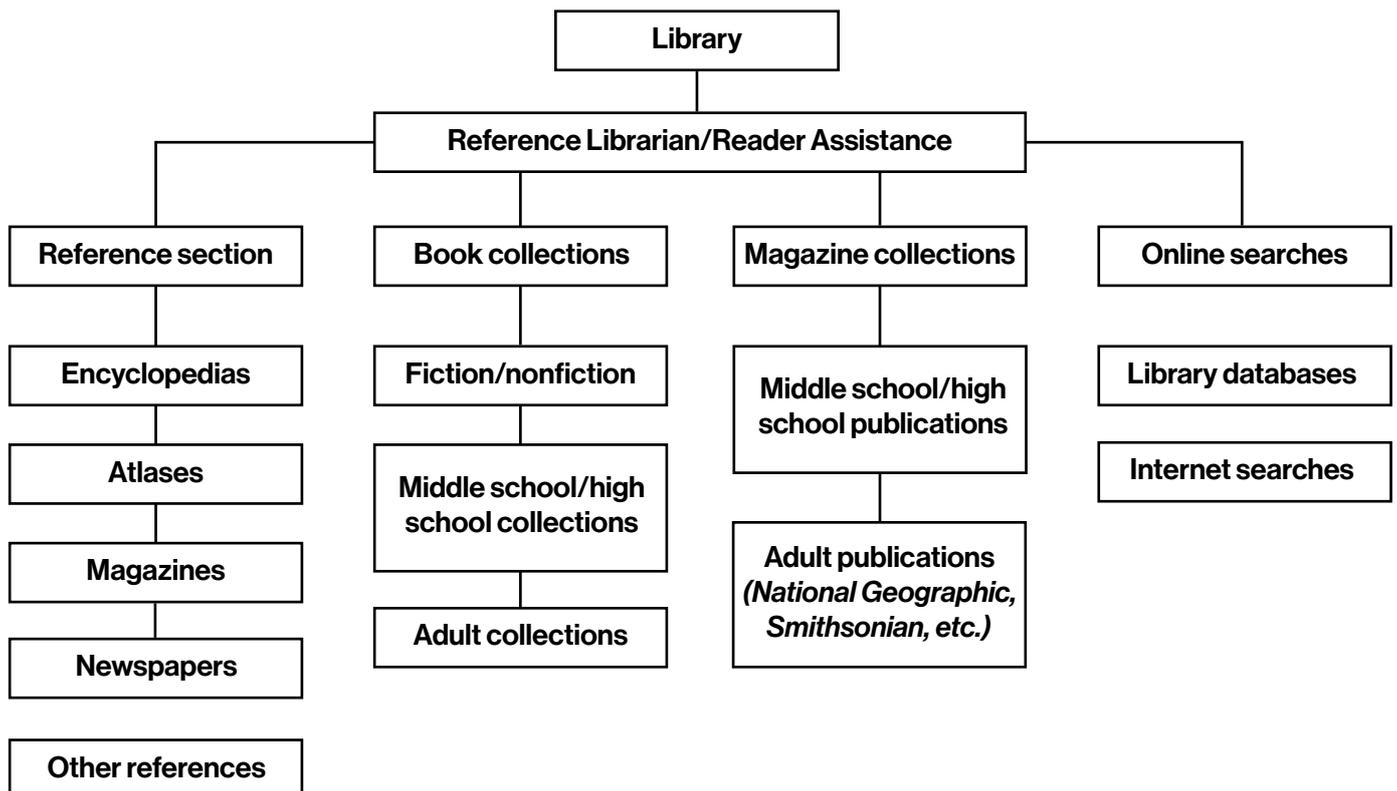
PRIMARY RESOURCES

These documents, recordings, videos, or images are original, first-hand accounts of an event or a time. They are created during or close to a particular event or time. The Diary of Anne Frank, for example, is a primary resource.

SECONDARY RESOURCES

These documents, recording, videos, or images are second-hand accounts of an historical event or a time. They often analyse or interpret primary resources. A biography of Anne Frank that quotes from her diary is a secondary resource.

Where can you find this?

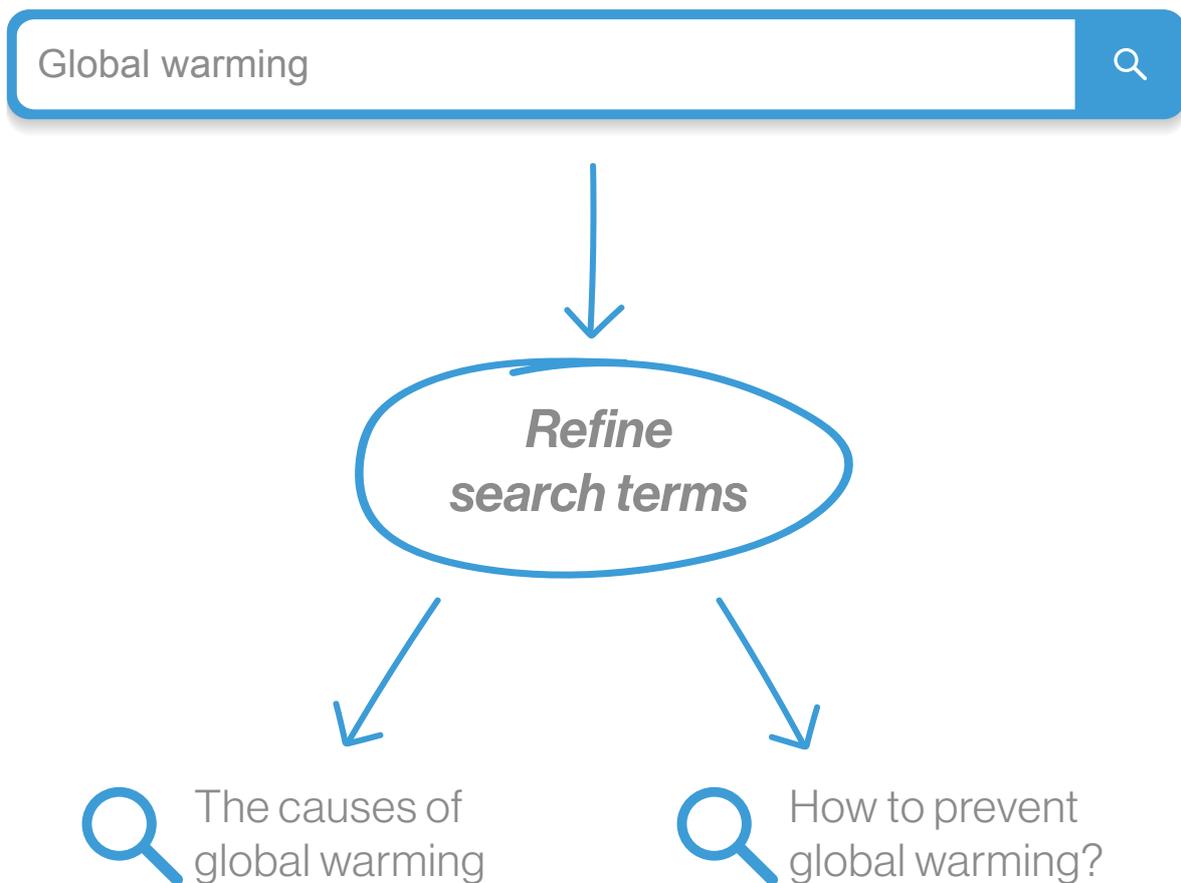


3 GATHER INFORMATION: Which search terms to use

Finding the right information is often about using key words. You need to narrow your search by refining your search terms.

Think carefully about what you want to know regarding your topic. In the case of global warming, for instance, do you want to know about the causes of global warming or how we can prevent global warming? By being more specific, you'll find the exact information you need for your research.

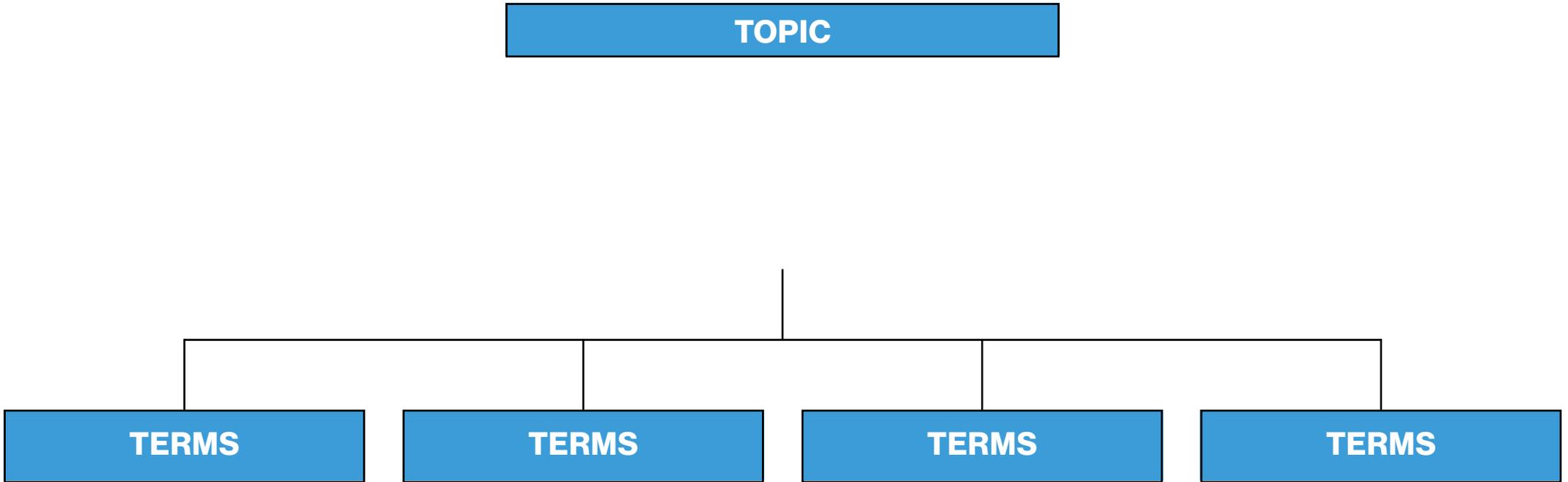
Which search terms should you use for your topic? Think about what you want to know. Put the main topic at the top and search terms underneath for more specificity.



3

GATHER INFORMATION:

How to evaluate information



3 GATHER INFORMATION: How to evaluate information

Not every resource you find will be worth using. How do you separate the best resources from those that are less useful? The best resources are accurate, reliable, credible, and current.

ACCURATE

- Can you find the same information in any other source?
- Is the resource well written and free of obvious typos and errors?

RELIABLE

- Is the source as free from bias as possible? Stick to resources that are purely factual when learning about new topics.
- Who is the publisher of the book or magazine? Who owns the website? Look up the publisher or website owner online. Do they have a good reputation? What else have they published or written about?

CREDIBLE

- Can you tell who wrote the book, article, or online piece? What education or experience do they have? Look for academic degrees or years of experience working in a particular field.
- Is there contact information? Can you e-mail or write to the author, organization, or website to ask questions or to get further information?

CURRENT

- For most topics, you'll need recent sources. When was the book or article published?
- For books, look for the year they were published on the copyright page. You can find it after the title page. For magazines, look for the month and year of publication.
- For websites, look for the date line or "last updated" line. Is the site kept up to date or does it have old information?

When carrying out your research, consider these factors and write down reasons why you should/should not use that source. This will give you a better understanding as to how trustworthy it is and will enable you to select the most reliable ones.

3

GATHER INFORMATION:

Note-taking resource

SOURCE	REASONS TO USE	REASONS NOT TO USE

4 Record and organise facts

Once you have your resources, you can start taking notes. Taking notes has four important goals:

- **To record the main ideas you will use to prepare your project**
- **To gather specific details or evidence to support your main ideas**
- **To record quotations that you want to use in your project**
- **To note that graphic images might support your text**

Notes are a few words you write down to collect important ideas and facts you will use later in your project. Your notes do not have to be complete sentences, or even complete words, as long as you can read and understand them later.



Find out **Secrets to Note-Taking** on the following pages!

4

RECORD AND ORGANISE FACTS

Secrets to note-taking

SECRET #1: USE A NUMBERING SYSTEM

As you do your research, you need to keep track of the resources you use and the notes you take from each resource. The secret: **use a note-taking numbering system** and stick to it. There are many systems, but one of the simplest is:

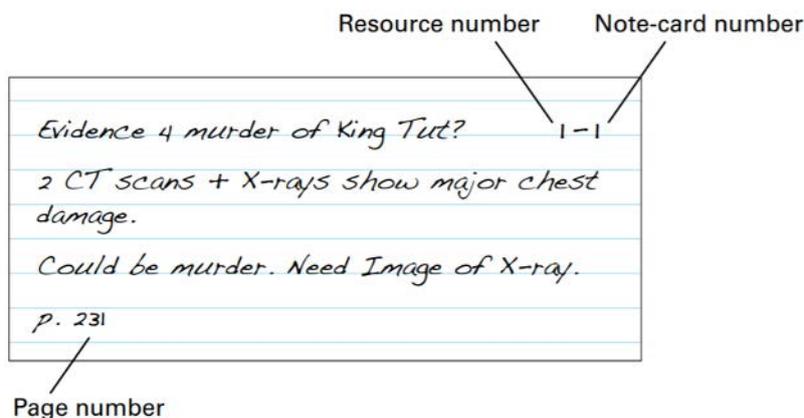
1. Number your resources

2. Number your notes

First, keep a numbered list of the resources you use in your research, either on separate printed or digital note cards, like the one below, or in a single document. Be sure to record the following information:

- Author(s)
- Title
- Location and name of publisher or website name and address
- Copyright date

You will need this information later for your bibliography!



Second, write the number of the resource and then the number of the note card in the upper right-hand corner, as in the sample below. Now you will always know which resource you used and the order of the note cards based on that resource.

Third, add the page number where you found the information from the book, magazine, or website. Later, if you need to check your facts, you'll know exactly where to find the original information.

4

RECORD AND ORGANISE FACTS

Secrets to note-taking

SECRET #2: WRITE WHAT YOU NEED

Once you have established your note-taking number system, the second secret to taking good notes is **knowing what you need to write and don't need to write in your notes.**

Not everything you read is going to be important to your topic. Most students make the mistake of trying to take notes the first time they read a book or an article. They waste time taking notes on material they will not use or do not need.

Review the article from Britannica School and highlight these items:

- 1. The key words and phrases that explain what global warming is**
- 2. The key facts that explain what the causes are**
- 3. The key facts that explain why global warming is a concern**
- 4. The points that explain how we can prevent global warming**

Scientists made an alarming discovery in the 1980s: the average surface temperature on Earth is slowly increasing. This trend is known as global warming. It is believed to be caused by an increase in the amounts of certain gases in the atmosphere.

Causes

For much of Earth's history, greenhouse gases were not a problem. This situation changed as people came to depend on fossil fuels (oil, coal and natural gas). People burn fossil fuels to power factories, run cars, produce electricity and heat houses. As fossil fuels burn, they release carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

In addition, people have cut down many forests. Trees use carbon dioxide when they make their own food. Fewer trees mean that less carbon dioxide is being taken out of the atmosphere.

Reasons for Concern

Scientists cannot tell just how warm Earth may get over time. Some guess an increase between 1.4°C and 5.8°C (2.5°F and 10.4°F) by the year 2100.

Warmer weather could make glaciers and the polar ice caps melt, causing sea levels to rise drastically. Plants, animals and buildings along coastlines could all be in danger.

The warmer temperatures might be a welcome change for some people in colder regions. However, people in areas that are already warm might suffer from more heat-related health problems. Likewise, some animals may not be able to take the change to their environment.

Working to Reduce Global Warming

Addressing the problem of global warming is a difficult task. Because there is a great demand for electricity and goods made in factories, they continue to be produced. People concerned about the environment suggest that individuals can reduce that demand in several ways. Sharing cars or taking a bus puts fewer vehicles on the road. Turning off lights, televisions and other electrical items when not in use puts less demand on electric companies to supply power. Buying appliances that have been designed to save energy helps directly, and it

5 Creating/writing the final task

You have reached the final step! To help you, below are two resources that give advice on how to approach both a presentation and a written assignment.



[Click here for guidance on how to create an engaging presentation](#)



[Click here for guidance on how to write an assignment](#)

Proofreading

Once you have written your final copy, remember to proofread it for errors in punctuation, spelling, and grammar. Read it from beginning to end, checking to be sure your ideas make sense and that your paper flows logically from one paragraph to another.

When you have corrected any mistakes, read the work over again. No one catches everything the first time through. You can also have someone else read it for you. Sometimes you can be too close to your own work to see the mistakes. You have only one chance to present your project—make it count!



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