

ESSENTIAL QUESTION RESEARCH PATHFINDER

RESEARCH PROCESS STEPS

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|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| I. Form Essential Question | VI. Create Project |
| II. Ask Supporting Questions | VII. Complete Works Cited |
| III. Identify Key Words | VIII. Evaluate Project |
| IV. Locate Information | IX. Complete Project Checklist |
| V. Formulate Answer | |

The purpose of this research is not to summarize the work of others, but to build on it and arrive at your own understanding of the subject. Your research will answer an **Essential Question**. An **Essential Question** probes a matter of considerable importance. An **Essential Question** requires movement beyond studying to some kind of action or resolve, toward the settlement of a challenge, the making of a choice, or the forming of an opinion or a decision. An **Essential Question cannot be answered by simple facts, or a "yes" or "no" answer.**

I: Developing Your Essential Question To Research

My General Subject Is: _____

Pre-Research: Familiarize yourself with your subject by reviewing information on the topic. Start now to keep **bibliography cards** for each resource accessed.

List Facts You Know About Your Subject:

List Questions You Have On Your Subject:

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS (EQs) do not have easy "yes" or "no" answers. **EQs** try to solve problems or understand complexities and causes and effect. **EQs** usually start with these types of words:

What effect . . . ?

Which path is the best to follow . . . ?

Which is the best design . . . ?

Why does it matter that . . . ?

How could things be better . . . ?

What is more important . . . ?

What difference . . . ?

What is the best choice . . . ?

How does this effect . . . ?

FORM PRELIMINARY ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS. Think about what you know and what you don't know about your topic and form some preliminary **Essential Questions**. Use the question starters above and below for possible ideas. You will synthesize your preliminary questions into your final Essential Questions for research.

What effect . . .

What difference . . .

Which is the best . . .

Why does it matter that . . .

How could things be better . . .

What is more important . . .

Synthesize these preliminary questions and form your **Essential Question** for research.
ENTER YOUR ESSENTIAL QUESTION FOR THIS PROJECT BELOW:

CONGRATULATIONS! You have formed an Essential Question.
IMPORTANT!!! Before you proceed, review your Essential Question with your teacher.

II: Ask Supporting Questions

Supporting Questions are questions you need to ask and answer before you can answer your **Essential Question**. They are usually facts that you need to know to be able to solve a problem. These are the questions you will research first.

List some supporting questions you need to research on index cards. As you begin to research, you will probably identify additional supporting questions you need to research.

*(Suggestion: Start entering your questions and the answers you find on **Note Cards**. On the back of the card, list the resource information you will need to create your **Bibliography**.)*

Note Card Example

Supporting Question:

Key Words:

Information you found:

(on back of card list source info needed for Bibliography)

III: Identify Key Words for Searching

To find information, you will look in **indexes of books** and in **Internet search tools** using **Key Words** and **Key Phrases** about your topic. Brainstorm and list key words and key phrases about your topic. The more time you take thinking about specific **Key Words** and **Key Phrases** specific to your topic, the more successful you will be in finding good information.

| KEY WORD | SYNONYMS | RELATED PHRASES |
|----------------------|---|--|
| Example: IMPERIALISM | COLONIALISM EXPLOITATION EXPLORERS HEGEMONY CONQUEST EXPANSIONISM SLAVERY | HISTORY OF EXPLORATION & TRADE ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION |

IV: Locate Information

Decide on your best sources of information to answer your Supporting Questions.

- ❑ Encyclopedia – Online or Print
- ❑ Scholarly Journal or Article – Online or Print
- ❑ Authoritative Book or Website
- ❑ Interview with an Expert
- ❑ Video / DVD / Audiotape
- ❑ TV / Radio
- ❑ Magazines / Newspapers

Now locate information and take notes. Be sure to keep track of your sources.

FILTER AND CROSS REFERENCE INFORMATION

Check your information for reliability. Information is generally considered to be reliable if it is written by an **AUTHORITY** on the subject or it is from a **SCHOLARLY JOURNAL** or from an **EDUCATIONAL WEBSITE**. Confirm questionable information by checking the facts from several sources.

V: Answer Essential Question

After you have gathered adequate information, use the facts you've gathered to form your answer to your **ESSENTIAL QUESTION**.

VI: Create Project

Complete your project in the format your teacher requires.

In your project be sure to clearly state:

- Your Essential Question
- Your Answer
- Your Supporting Arguments (based on the information you gathered)

Research may be presented in many formats – be sure to check with your teacher so you understand his/her expectations.

- Essay
 - Research Paper
 - Speech
 - Graphic / Chart / Poster
 - Written Narrative
 - Website
 - PowerPoint Presentation w/Speech
 - Other Presentation
 - Multi-Media Presentation
 - Group Project
 - Etc., etc., etc.
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VII: Works Cited Page or Bibliography

(check with your teacher for the level of citation required for your project)

Using the Modern Language Association (MLA) format, create a works cited list to attach to your project. Refer to MLA Works Cited Reference Sheet for formatting guidelines.

PHASE VIII: Evaluation of My Project

My Essential Question

My EQ required me to learn about my topic and form new thoughts or answers.

Strong Average Weak

My Supporting Questions

My SQs helped me learn the information I needed about my topic.

Strong Average Weak

Quality of Information

I found relevant and authoritative sources of information on my topic,

Strong Average Weak

Answer to Essential Question

I was able to form an answer to my EQ and support it adequately.

Strong Average Weak

Quality of Project

My project was focused and met the requirements of this assignment.

Strong Average Weak

Technical Aspects

I checked the spelling, grammar, and construction of my project to ensure it is high quality.

Strong Average Weak

FINAL CHECK LIST

- ❑ Identified My Subject and Reviewed Information on the Topic
- ❑ Identified an Essential Question for Research
- ❑ Determined Supporting Questions to Research So That I Can Answer My Essential Question
- ❑ Developed an Information Search Strategy
- ❑ Gathered Accurate and Relevant Information and Verified My Sources
- ❑ Answered My Essential Question or Formed a New One
- ❑ Distilled My Information into the Required Format for this Project
- ❑ Cited My Sources (including in-text citations for a paper, if required) with a Bibliography or Works Cited Page (teacher specified)
- ❑ Evaluated My Project for Quality
- ❑ Met All Timelines and Teacher Checkpoints

Need Help?

See Mrs. Goger or email your
question to her at:
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