
RESEARCHING TO DEEPEN UNDERSTANDING

DEVELOPING CORE PROFICIENCIES
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS / LITERACY UNIT

GRADE 6

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK



DEVELOPING CORE PROFICIENCIES SERIES

This unit is part of the Odell Education Literacy Instruction: Developing Core Proficiencies program, an integrated set of ELA units spanning grades 6-12. Funded by USNY Regents Research Fund, the program consists of a series of four units at each grade level that provide direct instruction on a set of literacy proficiencies at the heart of the CCSS.

Unit 1: Reading Closely for Textual Details
Unit 2: Making Evidence-Based Claims
Unit 3: Researching to Deepen Understanding
Unit 4: Building Evidence-Based Arguments

The Core Proficiencies units have been designed to be used in a variety of ways. They can be taught as short stand-alone units to introduce or develop key student proficiencies. Teachers can also integrate them into larger modules that build up to and around these proficiencies. Teachers can also apply the activity sequences and unit materials to different texts and topics. The materials have been intentionally designed for easy adaptation.

Unit materials are available for free at www.odelleducation.com

RESEARCHING TO DEEPEN UNDERSTANDING

Literacy is the ability to explore and express meaning in a given medium. There are certain core proficiencies one develops to gain fluency and expressiveness in that medium. One develops attunement to the intricacies of expression and the way meaning is created and constructed in it. One also develops the ability to express understanding and explain that understanding given the evidence at hand. These proficiencies of attention and explanation serve one of literacy's purposes, which is to explore what that medium holds—the aspects of life it illuminates.

Exploration, itself, is a proficiency. There are skills, methods, and habits of mind that we can develop to lead us ever deeper into the experiences accessed in that medium. These skills involve being open to new knowledge, asking questions and finding better and new answers. They involve listening to those around us, building on what they know and have experienced, and incorporating that knowledge into our own exploration. They also involve making

connections and organizing what we find, then returning to and refining those questions. As we explore, we also develop our ability to explain what we've come to think and show why we think it. Eventually this exploration—the process of research—leads us to an evolving perspective rooted in deep knowledge and understanding.

This unit develops that explorative proficiency: researching to deepen understanding. It lays out a process through which students learn to explore topics with their learning community, posing and refining questions and listening to experiences, and discovering areas they wish to investigate. It develops their ability to determine what they don't know or understand, and where and how to find that information. The unit also develops and supports student ability to archive and organize information in order to see and analyze connections in ways that aid comprehension, deepen their understanding and prepare them to express their evolving perspective.



HOW THIS UNIT IS STRUCTURED

Instruction in this unit is built around three components: a process for conducting research, a Research Portfolio developed by students throughout the process, and choosing a topic to research. The unit activities integrate these components in a learning progression that develops and supports proficiency in the entire research process.

Note on CCSS Requirements for Grade 6

Students in grade 6 are not expected by the CCSS to perform independent searches. Therefore, this unit outlines a simulated research process around a series of common sources that teachers provide to the class. Students engage in a sequence of activities that will support the development of research skills they will continue to use in the future, when performing searches independently.

Research Portfolio

The Research Portfolio is a structured collection of the research and analysis that students compile in their investigation. The components of the portfolio guide and archive the student's work in a way that teaches them key critical thinking, academic habits and organizational skills. By the end of the unit, students will have an organized, structured set of sources, annotations, notes, and analysis from which they can successfully accomplish any purpose they may have for their newly developed evidence-based perspective, whether that be an academic research paper or the construction of a product or process plan.

Instructional Sequence

The process for conducting research outlined in this unit is introduced and developed over a series of activities. As students work through these activities they create and compile the various parts of their Research Portfolios. While each part of the unit introduces skills associated with the various steps in the research process, it should be understood that the process itself is recursive and that these steps will be repeated and integrated as students conduct inquiry.

Part 1 introduces students to the idea of researching to deepen understanding and immerses students in a collaborative process for exploring a topic, choosing an Area of Investigation, and developing Inquiry Questions.

Part 2 addresses essential skills for assessing, annotating and making notes on sources to answer Inquiry Questions. Introduced here, these skills will be developed throughout the remainder of the unit.

Part 3 focuses students on the strategic close reading and evidence-based claim-making skills for analyzing sources in order to develop a deeper and comprehensive understanding of the Area of Investigation.

In **Part 4**, they review and evaluate their materials and analysis, refine their Inquiry Questions based on the evaluation, and return to the sources to address the identified gaps, using the skills introduced in Parts 2 and 3.

Part 5 supports students in organizing their research and synthesizing their analysis in order to develop an evidence-based perspective of the Areas of Investigation. Students can use this perspective and Research Portfolio for creating a range of final products.

≡ HOW THIS UNIT MIGHT BE EMBEDDED IN ≡ CONTENT-BASED CURRICULUM

Along with the research process and the Research Portfolio, the topics students explore and investigate make up the third component of the unit. This unit has been intentionally designed to support student research in a variety of curricular contexts. The activities introducing the research process and the materials that guide and construct the Research Portfolio can be used regardless of the subject matter students choose or need to investigate, or their purposes for that investigation.

Depending on their needs and goals, teachers can connect the instruction of this unit to texts and topics they are covering in their English classroom, as well as those that students are learning in other academic and technical disciplines.

Similarly, this unit outlines, develops, and supports a research process leading to an evidence-based perspective and a Research Portfolio that students can use for a variety of purposes, from a thesis-driven academic paper or presentation, to a design plan for constructing a house or industrial menu, to informing personal or community decision making.

To support teachers and students in choosing, connecting and exploring topics, this unit can be connected with Middle School OE Topic Resource Repositories. These repositories have been built for each grade level and contain a series of texts of suitable complexity level. Given that students in

grade 6 are not expected by the CCSS to perform independent searches, this unit outlines a simulated research process that relies strongly on collaborative work around a common topic. To ensure a richer experience for the class, it is strongly recommended that all students also work on the same Area of Investigation within that topic. The OE Resource Topic Repositories provide not only common texts, but also potential Areas of Investigation, and model questions and tools to support instruction. Teachers can use these Repositories, as the materials provided cover all their needs for the instruction of this unit. Teachers are encouraged to supplement these Repositories with texts of their own that relate to specific paths of inquiry their class takes. They can also choose their own Topic and/or Area of Investigation and can use the OE Topic Resource Repositories as models for selecting a sequence of appropriate common texts and building all the model tools. Teachers can then use the OE Text Selection Guidelines and Text Suitability Form, available for free at www.odelleducation.com



OE TOPIC RESOURCE REPOSITORIES

Teachers can choose among many approaches for integrating the instructional framework and materials of this unit into the topical context of their class. The unit is designed for adaption to the various contexts in which teachers want to develop their students' research proficiencies.

At the 6th grade level, students are not expected to perform independent searches for sources. Therefore, this unit is built around the concept of modeling the process around a common topic and Area of Investigation. The process involves a combination of collaborative and independent work to achieve a rich and coherent learning experience and allow students to explore and build on each other's knowledge.

Approaching the development of research proficiencies in this way is modeled and supported by the OE Topic Resource Repositories. These repositories model how topics can be presented to students. They provide narrative

introductions and Inquiry Questions to stimulate student interest and thinking. They articulate various directions students could explore within the topic and provide pre-selected sources and model tools to support instruction of the research process. Teachers may choose to use these Topic Resource Repositories to support their instruction or could take a similar approach with another topic. Places where the repository resources can be used are indicated in the unit plan.

Odell Education provides Topic Resource Repositories for all grade levels. The Middle School Topic Resource Repositories provide teachers with a set of sources that students can use to conduct supported research.



HOW THIS UNIT TEACHES VOCABULARY

This unit draws on a variety of strategies for teaching academic and disciplinary vocabulary. The primary strategy is the way critical disciplinary vocabulary and concepts are built into the instruction. Students are taught words like "analyze," "perspective," "questioning," and "criteria" through their explicit use in the activities. Students come to understand and use these words as they think about and evaluate their research and analysis and those of their peers. The handouts and worksheets play a key role in

this process. By the end of the unit, students will have developed deep conceptual knowledge of key vocabulary that they can transfer to a variety of academic and public contexts. The activities also provide many opportunities for academic vocabulary instruction. Many of the activities focus directly on analyzing the way authors use language and key words to develop ideas and achieve specific purposes.

HOW THIS UNIT ALIGNS WITH CCSS FOR ELA/LITERACY

The instructional focus of this unit is on building student proficiency in a process for conducting research: developing and refining Inquiry Questions; assessing, analyzing, and synthesizing multiple sources to answer those questions; and organizing and using evidence from those sources to explain understanding in ways that avoid plagiarism. As such, the unit primarily aligns with **W.6.7** (*Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate*); **W.6.8** (*Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources; assess the credibility of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and providing basic bibliographic information for sources*) and **W.6.9** (*Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research*)

This process involves key moments of both collaboration and independence. As the unit leads students through structured collaborative processes for initiating and refining inquiry, it develops their ability in **SL.6.1** (*Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly*). At other moments, students are alone in their search for and analysis of sources, building their proficiency for **RI.6.10** (*Read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range*).

The task of writing from researched sources is an important part of larger writing processes. Thus, the unit develops student ability in key aspects of the production of writing expressed in the expectations of **W.6.4-5**, specifically their (*development, organization, planning, with some guidance and support from peers and adults*). And as they strategically write organized analysis,

eventually building to a written evidence-based perspective, students develop their ability for **W.6.2** (*Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content*).

Students develop these skills throughout the unit through direct instruction and guided practice, and they are assessed continuously through activities, graphic organizers, and written products.

As students develop these primary targeted CCSS skill sets, they also practice and use related reading skills from supporting CCSS. Throughout the research process, they read key sources closely and analyze textual detail to answer their Inquiry Questions, particularly building their growing proficiency for **RI.6.1** (*Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text*); **RI.6.2** (*Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments*); **RI.6.4** (*Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text*); **RI.6.6** (*Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text*); and **RI.6.9** (*Compare and contrast one author's presentation of events with that of another*).

SOURCES OF THIS UNIT INSTRUCTION

The instructional ideas contained in this unit are presented as our contribution to the national effort to prepare all US secondary students for college and career readiness. We intend that these principles, activities, tools, and strategies will be taken up, adapted, and improved upon by the educators who use them. While we take full responsibility for the content of the unit, and recognize that mentioning our key sources in no way implies their endorsement of that content,

we would like to acknowledge some important influences and reference points for this work: the students and colleagues who contributed to the classroom experiences of our development team; the Common Core Standards; the PARCC ELA Curriculum Frameworks; the EQuIP Quality Review ELA Rubric; and the research on text complexity and text-dependent questioning from Student Achievement Partners.

DEFINITION OF TERMS USED IN THIS UNIT

Area of Investigation: a particular theme, question, problem, or more focused sub-topic within the general topic that warrants investigation.

Inquiry Question: questions posed by researchers about their Areas of Investigation to be answered through inquiry.

Research Portfolio: the binder or electronic folder where students physically or electronically store and organize all the material related to their personal research.

Topic: the general topic chosen for class exploration.

Topic Resource Repository: a repository of information on a topic including a general description, possible Areas of Investigation, source locations and model sources provided by OE to facilitate and support teaching and learning of the research process.



HOW TO USE THESE MATERIALS

This unit is in the format of a Compressed File. Files are organized so you can easily browse through the materials and find everything you need to print or e-mail for each day. The materials are organized into folders:

RESEARCH UNIT PLAN

- The Research Unit Plan (outlines the instructional activities of this unit and provides instructional notes)
- Teacher Research Unit Guide (lists the sequence of unit activities and related materials)
- Student Research Plan (guides students through the main steps of the research process)

HANDOUTS

This folder contains all of the supporting handouts that guide students through the research process, explaining key processes for students and teachers. It includes the Research Criteria Matrix that aids teacher and student evaluation of student

TOOLS

This folder contains all of the supporting tools that help students build their Research Portfolios, aiding student thinking, habits, and analysis of researched information. Annotated Tools are provided to aid teacher instruction.

CHECKLISTS

This folder contains all of the checklists that guide students and teachers in the process of evaluating their work based on specific qualitative criteria.

TOOLS and **CHECKLISTS** have been created as **editable PDF forms**. With the free version of Adobe Reader, students and teachers are able to type in them and save their work for recording and e-mailing. This allows students and teachers to work either with paper and pencil or electronically according to their strengths and needs. It also allows teachers to collect and organize student work for evaluation and formative assessment.

TOPIC RESOURCE REPOSITORIES

Teachers can elect to use Topic Resource Repositories to support the instruction of the Research Unit Plan. The repositories contain information and sources for stimulating and supporting student research within a broad topic. The repositories contain:

- Information for framing the topic
- Possible Areas of Investigation
- Model Inquiry Questions
- Common source texts for instruction
- Models of Unit Tools

Activities where repository texts should be used are specifically referenced in the Unit Plan.

INTRO

INTRODUCTION TO UNIT

OBJECTIVE:

The teacher explains how critical readers use inquiry and research to deepen their understanding and develop an evidence-based perspective on a topic. Students are introduced to the purposes, the process, and the materials of the unit.

MATERIALS:

Teacher Research Unit Guide
Student Research Plan

TEACHER RESEARCH UNIT GUIDE - GRADE 6	
INTRODUCTION	Introduction to Unit
I. INITIATING INQUIRY <i>Students determine what they want to know about a topic and develop inquiry questions that they will investigate.</i>	1. Exploring a Topic
	2. Choosing an Area of Investigation
	3. Generating Inquiry Questions
II. GATHERING INFORMATION <i>Students find and take notes on sources that will help them answer their inquiry questions and define the scope of their investigation.</i>	1. Introduction to Sources
	2. Assessing Sources
	3. Making and Recording Notes
III. DEEPENING UNDERSTANDING <i>Students analyze sources to deepen their understanding and answer their inquiry questions.</i>	1. Reading Sources Closely
	2. Writing Evidence-Based Claims about Sources
	3. Discussing Understanding of the Area of Investigation
IV. FINALIZING INQUIRY <i>Students synthesize their information to determine what they have learned and what more they need to know about their area of investigation. They gather and analyze more information to complete their inquiry.</i>	1. Addressing an Inquiry Question
	2. Organizing Evidence
	3. Evaluating Research
	4. Refining Inquiry
V. DEVELOPING AND COMMUNICATING AN EVIDENCE-BASED PERSPECTIVE <i>Students review and synthesize their research to develop and communicate an evidence-based perspective on their area of investigation.</i>	1. Reviewing Research Portfolios
	2. Expressing an Evidence-Based Perspective
	3. Writing a Bibliography

INTRODUCTION TO UNIT

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

Introduce the purposes of the unit: 1) to develop the skills and habits used in conducting research to deepen understanding; and 2) to use those skills and habits in developing and communicating an evidence-based perspective on a topic by the end of the research process (in Part 5). Explain that the entire class will decide on a question or problem within a topic that they will all research together. The class will work from the same sources, but each student will compile his or her own Research Portfolio of personal annotations, notes, analysis, and writing.

INTRODUCTORY DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH

Begin the unit with a discussion of the nature, process, and tools of research. This unit approaches research as something literate people do to deepen their understanding of topics and develop a perspective that evolves as new evidence is found, analyzed and incorporated. Discuss with students:

- ◇ how this differs from having an opinion and setting out trying to find support for it
- ◇ how successful researchers follow a general iterative process and use tools and strategies to find, analyze, and organize information
- ◇ how this process leads researchers to adopt different points of view and to explore different paths as a consequence of their findings
- ◇ how a researched understanding and perspective serves many purposes, among them:
 - ⇒ Writing an article, essay, or academic paper on a topic or text
 - ⇒ Developing a position on a controversial issue
 - ⇒ Developing business plans
 - ⇒ Designing and building objects
 - ⇒ Informing personal and community decision-making
 - ⇒ Developing processes and plans
 - ⇒ Writing fictional or historical narratives
 - ⇒ Giving presentations

OVERVIEW RESEARCH PROCESS AND PORTFOLIO

Overview the two related instructional focuses: 1) a strategic research process and 2) an organizational system for annotating and archiving sources and making and recording notes and analysis. It's important that students have an initial understanding of the process so they can allow themselves to explore the topic and sources before feeling like they need to have a final position or thesis. Likewise it's important that students use the portfolio to organize and store their research and analysis so they have a strong record from which to draw upon to develop their evidence-based perspectives.

Process

This unit introduces students to a research process. Stress that while students will follow the process sequentially, they will also return to many of the steps and repeat them as their research develops.

Use the Student Research Plan to give students an overview of the process, briefly explaining the elements and importance of each stage. Its purpose is to highlight the general research process, showing the steps students will take and the tools they will use. Students can use it as a guide or checklist while working. They can also use it as a reference for future research projects in ELA or other disciplines.



INTRODUCTION TO UNIT (CONT'D)

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

Portfolio

Throughout the research process, students are expected to use a structured organizational system for annotating and analyzing sources and recording and storing information. As they work through the steps, they build Research Portfolios consisting of various tools that guide, store, and organize their research and analysis. The portfolio may be either electronic or on paper.

Use the Portfolio Description to introduce and explain the purpose and structure of each section.

The Research Portfolio is not filled sequentially. Its purpose is to organize information and analysis **throughout the research process**, as opposed to compiling and organizing information **at the end of the process**. Organizing information along the way helps focus research and supports comprehension and successful writing.

Inquiry Questions are at the heart of the process and guide students every step of the way. Students are constantly asking and answering questions, and the Research Portfolio is a reflection of the process that they follow.

Student research thus remains organized at all times, allowing them to browse within their materials, to establish connections easily, and to decide what inquiry steps to take next based on the analysis of their current findings.

PORTFOLIO SECTIONS	CONTENT
<p>SECTION 1: DEFINING AN AREA OF INVESTIGATION</p> <p><i>This section stores all the work you do exploring the Topic and choosing an Area of Investigation.</i></p>	<p>Exploring a Topic Area Evaluation Checklist Potential Sources</p>
<p>SECTION 2: GATHERING AND ANALYZING INFORMATION</p> <p><i>This section stores all the information you gather throughout your investigation. It also stores your notes and analysis of sources. All the tools should be grouped by source.</i></p>	<p>Potential Sources Annotated Sources Personal Drafts Taking Notes Forming EBC</p>
<p>SECTION 3: DRAWING CONCLUSIONS</p> <p><i>This section stores your Notes and EBCs about Inquiry Questions, your research evaluation, and the personal perspective that you come to at the end of your inquiry. Group the Taking Notes, Forming EBC or Organizing EBC by Inquiry Question.</i></p>	<p>Taking Notes Forming EBC Organizing EBC Synthesizing EBC Research Evaluation Evidence-Based Perspective</p>

PART 1

INITIATING INQUIRY

OBJECTIVE:

Students learn the purposes and processes of using inquiry and research to deepen understanding. Students initiate inquiry on a topic through collaboratively generating questions to direct and frame research. By the end of Part 1, students will have identified an Area of Investigation and developed Inquiry Questions.

ACTIVITIES

1- EXPLORING A TOPIC

The teacher leads a class exploration of a topic.

2- CHOOSING AN AREA OF INVESTIGATION

The class chooses an Area of Investigation and develops a research question or problem.

3- GENERATING INQUIRY QUESTIONS

Students generate Inquiry Questions to guide their collection of information on their Area of Investigation.

MATERIALS:

Texts #1-3
TCD Checklist
Potential Sources
Area Evaluation Checklist
Posing Inquiry Questions
Research Criteria Matrix

ALIGNMENT TO CCSS

TARGETED STANDARD(S):

W.6.7: Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.

W.6.8: Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources; assess the credibility of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and providing basic bibliographic information for sources.

W.6.9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

SUPPORTING STANDARD(S):

W.6.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

RI.6.1: Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RI.6.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

SL.6.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.



ACTIVITY 1: EXPLORING A TOPIC

The teacher leads a class exploration of a topic.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

NOTE ON UNIT TOPICS

Teachers can use the materials of this unit in multiple ways, depending on their students and curricular context. They can use topics and common texts provided in the Topic Resource Repositories or choose their own topic and texts of similar richness and suitability. If teachers choose to explore their own topic, they can use the repositories as models and the Text Suitability Form (available for free at www.odelleducation.com) to help guide their research and selection of sources. It is important for students to explore the topic for a few days to build an initial knowledge base and to discover various aspects of the topic that are of real interest to them. This exploration should take place in and outside of class—supported by interaction with a few common texts, as well as general discussion of the topic with their peers, teachers, and wider learning community.

By the end of these several days, each student should be able to summarize generally the growing conversation and to articulate a few areas that she or he would like to investigate.

INTRODUCING A TOPIC AROUND A COMMON TEXT

- Begin the research process with the idea of exploring a topic.
- Introduce the general topic.
- Make connections to curricular contexts if relevant, including texts the class has previously read.
- Use [Text #1 from the Topic Resource Repository](#) to help introduce the topic and to stimulate thinking and interest in the topic.
- Have students share their current knowledge of the topic based on the common text as well as personal previous knowledge: What do they already know about this topic?
- Model posing questions and have students pose their own about the topic based on the common text and their personal interests: What (more) do they want to know about this topic?

BUILDING BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE AROUND COMMON TEXTS

Using Inquiry Questions is absolutely essential to the research process articulated in this unit. Developing student proficiency for posing general and specific questions to direct inquiry and deepen understanding is a central instructional focus. This questioning process, itself, is iterative and serves specific functions at different stages throughout the process. At this point, students are looking for general information that will help them gain background knowledge and a general understanding of the topic.

- Explain the basic principles of using Inquiry Questions to guide searches. Inquiry Questions can be simply defined as questions that identify things you need to know about a topic and that will help guide your research and analysis.
- Use [Texts #2 and #3 from the Topic Resource Repository](#) to help students build some general background knowledge about the topic and to practice posing Inquiry Questions.
- You may use the questions posed while introducing the topic as well as additional questions to guide the reading of the texts. Use [Parts I-III \(Topic Description, Possible Areas of Investigation, and Guiding Questions\) of the Topic Resource Repository](#) to help students pose questions and generate discussion.
- Have students read the texts in groups of three using Guiding Questions and taking notes on a draft paper for these two basic questions (you may ask students to split the page in two):

(1) What do I find interesting?

(2) What do I want to learn more about?



ACTIVITY 1: EXPLORING A TOPIC (CONT'D)

POTENTIAL SOURCES TOOL

POTENTIAL SOURCES is a tool where students record general information about potential sources that they may use for the research project. They can also write a brief description of the content and personal comments. An annotated version is provided for teachers.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

RECORDING SOURCES

- Introduce the structure and purposes of the Potential Sources tool. The annotated version of the tool can be used as a guide.
- For the purpose of this activity, students only use part of the tool:
 - ◇ Name; Topic; Source (# - Title - Author - Location - Publication Date);
General content/ key ideas / personal comments

Later on, they will record more information – related to their evaluation of the source’s credibility, richness, and interest – when they use the Assessing Sources handout.

- Remind students that at this point, their notes must serve two main purposes: recording general information about a source, and providing relevant information about its content.
- Model its use with information from [Texts #1-3 from the Topic Resource Repository](#).
- When modeling, spend some time explaining different ways that notes for the section on "General Content / Key Ideas / Personal Comments" can be made: quotes, facts and numbers, brief description of the content, personal impressions and evaluation of the quality of the content, etc.
- Have students practice using the Potential Sources tool with [Texts #2 and #3 from the Topic Resource Repository](#).

ORGANIZING THE RESEARCH PORTFOLIO

- Instruct students to store all their notes, handouts and Potential Sources tools in SECTION 1 of their Research Portfolios: Defining an Area of Investigation.

≡ ACTIVITY 2: CHOOSING AN AREA OF INVESTIGATION

The class chooses an Area of Investigation and develops a research question or problem.

AREA EVALUATION CHECKLIST

The **AREA EVALUATION CHECKLIST** guides the class in the process of evaluating potential Areas of Investigation. The teacher uses the checklist with the class to determine if an area warrants investigation.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

- Based on class discussion of the first few texts, and based on their notes about what they found interesting and what they would want to know more about, explore potential Areas of Investigation within the general topic. **Examples are provided in the Topic Resource Repository.**
- As a class, talk about potential areas of interest students have with respect to the checklist criteria:
 - ◇ Coherence
 - ◇ Scope
 - ◇ Relevance
 - ◇ Interest
- The goal is to choose one Area of Investigation to research as a class.

The class can use the **Area of Investigation developed in the Topic Resource Repository.** If the teacher chooses to explore an Area of Investigation different from the one modeled in the Topic Resource Repository, he/she will have to find and sequence similar text sets to support that area.

- Once the Area of Investigation has been vetted as a class, express it in the form of a problem or overarching question. This gives the research project a clear direction and helps students develop their ability to pose Inquiry Questions.

ORGANIZING THE RESEARCH PORTFOLIO

- Instruct students to store all their notes, handouts and the Area Evaluation Checklist in SECTION 1 of their Research Portfolios: Defining an Area of Investigation.

ACTIVITY 3: GENERATING INQUIRY QUESTIONS

Students generate Inquiry Questions to guide their collection of information on the Area of Investigation.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

The class will now have decided on an Area of Investigation and expressed it in the form of a problem or overarching question. They now brainstorm **more specific questions** about the Area of Investigation that will guide the research.

Use the Posing Inquiry Questions handout to guide students in the brainstorming process and to help students generate, select, and refine their emerging Inquiry Questions.

- Model posing various types of questions about the Area of Investigation, building from students' reading of common texts. **Model texts and questions are provided in the Topic Resource Repository.**
- Work through modeling and discussion to help students frame fruitful questions that require and will sustain research.
- Questioning should be collaborative, either as an entire class or in small groups.
- Students should help each other pose questions exploring as many possible aspects of the Area of Investigation as possible. As with any brainstorming activity, volume should be the initial goal, allowing students to build off each other's ideas.
- If done as an entire class, a scribe (student or teacher) records the questions on the board.
- If technology permits, the collaborative questioning can be done with a Google doc or Smartboard, allowing all the students to share and record their questions electronically.
- Encourage students to build on questions posed by the group.
- Once the brainstorming process is over, use the checklist provided in the Posing Inquiry Questions handout to help students vet and refine their Inquiry Questions.
- Set a quantitative goal: at the end of the process, the class should have a list of 5-10 good Inquiry Questions about the Area of Investigation that they will use to begin research.
- As a set, answering the Inquiry Questions should provide a comprehensive understanding of the Area of Investigation.

ORGANIZING THE RESEARCH PORTFOLIO

- Instruct students to store all their notes, handouts and the list of Inquiry Questions in SECTION 1 of their Research Portfolio: Defining an Area of Investigation.



ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

In this part of the unit students will have produced:

- ◇ Potential Sources tools
- ◇ Inquiry Questions

Evaluate these products, as well as their participation and discussion using the Research Criteria Matrix.

The **Research Criteria Matrix** articulates the key proficiencies and habits of the research process that students need to build. The matrix breaks up the skills into categories, articulating the various criteria within each by which to evaluate student performance. These skills and habits span the entire research process and should be tracked to ensure appropriate development. For each criterion, grade-level performance descriptors are provided to support evaluation.

For Part 1, examine student products and performance for initial ability in the following criteria:

- Setting direction for research
- Posing Inquiry Questions

Structured and purposeful collaboration plays an important role in this initial part. Developing an understanding that research involves a combination of collaborative and independent skills is an essential objective of the unit. Many of the activities are designed for building collaborative literacy skills. The **Text-Centered Discussion Checklist** can be a resource for supporting this instruction and evaluation. One strategy for using the TCD checklist in this context is to identify one to three of the criteria for the class as a whole to focus on throughout this unit. As students make their way through the unit, teachers can continually return to this focus. For example, the three “Questioning” criteria (Posing Questions, Responding to Questions, and Making Connections) might be a good natural focus for collaboration skills.

PART 2

GATHERING INFORMATION

OBJECTIVE:

Students learn how to assess and annotate sources, and keep an organized record of their findings. By the end of Part 2, students will have assessed the main common sources and gathered notes about the information in the texts.



ACTIVITIES

1- INTRODUCTION TO SOURCES

The teacher explains the concept of sources of information and discusses source types, locations, and searches.

2- ASSESSING SOURCES

The teacher explains and models how to assess sources to determine their credibility and relevance to Inquiry Questions.

3- MAKING AND RECORDING NOTES

The teacher explains how to annotate sources and record key information, personal impressions, and ideas for further exploration in the Area of Investigation.

MATERIALS:

Texts # 2-6
Potential Sources
Assessing Sources Handout
Taking Notes
Research Criteria Matrix



ALIGNMENT TO CCSS

TARGETED STANDARD(S):

W.6.7: Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.

W.6.8: Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources; assess the credibility of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and providing basic bibliographic information for sources.

W.6.9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

SUPPORTING STANDARD(S):

W.6.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. **RI.6.1:** Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. **RI.6.2:** Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments. **RI.6.4:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings. **RI.6.6:** Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text. **RI.6.10:** By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.



ACTIVITY 1: INTRODUCTION TO SOURCES

Students learn the concept of sources of information and understand the use of the word source in a research setting.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

The CCSS do not explicitly expect students at grade six to perform their own independent searches for sources. Most sixth graders will have some experience informally searching for information; but the degree to which they can search strategically and successfully for precise information from a variety of locations will vary greatly. Regardless of their ability to search independently, it is essential for all students at this level to develop a conceptual understanding of “sources of information.” In this unit, sufficient sources of information for successfully answering the class’s research question should be found by the teacher or provided in a Middle School Topic Resource Repository. Nonetheless, students should understand the provided texts as “sources” of information resulting from strategic searches based on their Inquiry Questions. This activity frames these sources as such. Based on this activity, students can begin to try out searches for sources, and some student searching may yield useful information. Such information should be incorporated into the class research. Students, however, should not be expected to independently provide the sources necessary for successful research at this level. The objective is for them to understand the concept of texts as sources of information that may pertain to their inquiry.

- Define sources for students.
- Discuss different types of sources of information (i.e. authorities, teachers, parents, books, articles, experiments, etc.)
- Highlight that texts are a commonly used type of source for academic research.
- Refer now to the texts the class has been reading as sources.



ACTIVITY 2: ASSESSING SOURCES

The teacher explains and models how to assess sources to determine their credibility and relevance to Inquiry Questions.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

EVALUATION FACTORS

- Explain why the assessment of a source’s credibility, richness and interest is fundamental to the selection of sources for the research:
 - ◇ to reflect on and evaluate the source of the information
 - ◇ to purge one’s research during the process (eliminating the least credible and relevant)
 - ◇ to identify the most important sources to analyze more deeply through close reading
- Introduce the Assessing Sources Handout, and use it as a guide to lead a class discussion about credibility, accessibility and interest, relevance and richness.



ACTIVITY 2: ASSESSING SOURCES (CONT'D)

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

DISCUSSING CREDIBILITY AND RELEVANCE OF MODEL SOURCES

- Using the Assessing Sources handout, model for students how to do a quick analysis of [Text #1 from the Topic Resource Repository](#).
- Walk students through the handout's process and questions for assessing credibility and relevance.
- Show how the resulting assessment will be recorded on the Potential Sources tool (High, Medium, Low).
- Using [Texts #5 and #6 in a Topic Resource Repository](#), model and discuss assessing sources of uncertain credibility or suitability for specific Inquiry Questions.
- Students can practice the use of the Assessing Sources process with [Text #3 from the Topic Resource Repository](#), working in pairs to talk through their preliminary analysis of the text's *credibility, accessibility, interest, and relevance*.

ORGANIZING THE RESEARCH PORTFOLIO

- Instruct students to store all their Potential Sources tools and their handouts in SECTION 2 of their Research Portfolios: Gathering and Analyzing Information.



ACTIVITY 3: MAKING AND RECORDING NOTES

The teacher explains how to annotate sources and record key information, personal impressions and ideas for further exploration of the Area of Investigation.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

ANNOTATING SOURCES

The first step in recording important information about a source is annotating a printed version of the source with pencil, highlighter or markers, or an electronic version of the source using electronic highlighting and commenting tools. Use [Texts #1-5 from the Topic Resource Repository](#) for modeling and student work on annotation.

- The annotation process includes:
 - ◇ marking key information, words, and concepts
 - ◇ recording initial impressions,
 - ◇ identifying areas for possible further exploration,
 - ◇ making connections to other sources,
 - ◇ coding details to the Inquiry Questions.
- The teacher models the process with part of a common text and provides guides for annotating a text when reading for specific purposes.
- Then students practice annotating the rest of the text individually.
- Student volunteers share their annotations and the class discusses their relevance.
- Explain that annotated texts are valuable sources of information and should always be stored and organized in SECTION 2 of the Research Portfolio.

ACTIVITY 3: MAKING AND RECORDING NOTES (CONT'D)

TAKING NOTES TOOL

The **TAKING NOTES** tool helps students make and organize notes on sources with respect to their Inquiry Questions. It is based on the principle of “two column notes” (also known as the Cornell system), providing spaces for both note “taking” (recording information) and note “making” (commenting on that information). It sets up detail-based textual and cross-textual analysis and claim making. The sheet is divided into three sections: source reference, details and comments. An annotated version is provided for teachers.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

TAKING NOTES

- Introduce the Taking Notes tool. You may use the annotated version for support.
- Using an Inquiry Question to guide the reading of one of the common texts that you have just annotated, model taking notes on details addressing that Inquiry Question. Repeat the process with multiple Inquiry Questions and / or texts as necessary.
- Then, go back to the notes and add personal comments about the details recorded.
- Students read a new common text. In small groups, they annotate it, and take / make notes on a Taking Notes tool.
- Students will initially use a Taking Notes tool for each source, as it is the most natural and simple way of organizing notes when reading a specific source.

USING VARIOUS SOURCES TO ANSWER AN INQUIRY QUESTION

- Go back to two of the model Taking Notes from the common texts read in class, and use colored pencils or markers to mark notes addressing the same Inquiry Questions across both sources.
- Explain another way of taking notes based on this observation: organizing notes by Inquiry Question rather than by source. This allows students to develop a series of key details and comments addressing the same Inquiry Question. Connections can be made and related information can thus be analyzed throughout the research process instead of at the end. This will help students:
 - ◇ see repeated information from multiple sources
 - ◇ identify gaps, as they assess information per each Inquiry Question
 - ◇ make connections between the details collected and draw conclusions
 - ◇ identify new investigation paths based on their analysis of the information collected to that point
 - ◇ determine the need to make adjustments to their Inquiry Questions
 - ◇ analyze the information collected for each Inquiry Question easily when they will need to develop their evidence-based perspectives
- This alternate organization of notes can be achieved by coding notes made on sources with colors across multiple Taking Notes tools (if notes are made on paper), or by copy-pasting electronic notes from different sources onto a new Taking Notes tool addressing one Inquiry Question.

ACTIVITY 3: MAKING AND RECORDING NOTES (CONT'D)

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

TAKING NOTES INDEPENDENTLY

- Students go back to the sources and select the ones that rated higher during the assessing sources process.
- They use their notes in the General Content box in the Potential Sources tool to connect sources to specific Inquiry Questions.
- They read these sources closely using their Inquiry Questions as guiding questions and take notes on a Taking Notes tool.
- They can also use their annotations on paper or on file to identify important details that can be noted on the Taking Notes tool.

This process will encourage them to think about the details drawn from their sources, analyze and connect them.

ORGANIZING THE RESEARCH PORTFOLIO

- Instruct students to store all their notes and handouts in SECTION 2 of their Research Portfolios: Gathering and Analyzing Information.

ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

In this part of the unit students will have produced:

- ◇ Potential Sources tools
- ◇ Annotated common texts
- ◇ Taking Notes tools

Evaluate these products, as well as their participation and discussion using the Research Criteria Matrix.

For Part 2, examine student products and performance for initial ability in the following criteria:

- Posing Inquiry Questions
- Monitoring and evaluating progress
- Assessing sources for credibility and relevance
- Paraphrasing, quoting and referencing sources
- Annotating sources and noting connections and observations
- Reorganizing information based on deepening understanding.

PART 3

DEEPENING UNDERSTANDING

OBJECTIVE:

Students analyze sources through close reading to deepen their understanding and draw personal conclusions about the Area of Investigation. By the end of Part 3, students will have a series of evidence-based claims addressing their Inquiry Questions.

ACTIVITIES

1- READING SOURCES CLOSELY

Students use their Inquiry Questions to read sources closely, analyzing them for content, perspective, and relevance.

2- WRITING EVIDENCE-BASED CLAIMS ABOUT SOURCES

Students develop evidence-based claims on some of the common sources using their notes and annotations.

3- DISCUSSING UNDERSTANDING OF THE AREA OF INVESTIGATION

Students share with the class the evidence-based claims they have developed independently on the common sources, and discuss their understanding of the Area of Investigation based of these EBCs.

MATERIALS:

Texts # 7-10
Forming EBC
Forming EBC Handout
EBC Criteria Checklist
Writing EBC Handout
Connecting Ideas Handout
Research Criteria Matrix

ALIGNMENT TO CCSS

TARGETED STANDARD(S):

W.6.7: Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.

W.6.8: Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources; assess the credibility of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and providing basic bibliographic information for sources.

W.6.9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

RI.6.7: Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.

RI.6.9: Compare and contrast one author's presentation of events with that of another.

RI.6.10: By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

SUPPORTING STANDARD(S):

W.6.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. **W.6.5:** With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach. **RI.6.1:** Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. **RI.6.2:** Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments. **RI.6.4:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings. **RI.6.6:** Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text.



ACTIVITY 1: READING SOURCES CLOSELY

FORMING EBC TOOL

The **FORMING EVIDENCE-BASED CLAIMS** tool incorporates skills students develop in the Reading Closely and Making Evidence-Based Claims units. Students use an Inquiry Question to guide their reading, marking details that help them answer this question. Then, they select details that seem most relevant, record their thoughts and connections, and make a claim they have come to from their analysis that answers their Inquiry Question.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

In this activity, students employ skills developed in the Reading Closely for Textual Details unit to analyze selected sources for content. The approach to close reading developed in that unit and incorporated here involves strategically questioning texts to access deep meaning associated with key textual details. In the Reading Closely unit, students develop this proficiency using a general Guiding Question framework. Now, in the context of their research, students use their Inquiry Questions to guide their analysis. If their students need further work on developing independence in close reading, teachers are encouraged to use the additional materials and approaches contained in the Reading Closely unit.

- Orient students to the Forming EBC tool. Explain that the tool incorporates the process of the Analyzing Details tool from the Reading Closely unit and the Forming EBC tool from the Making EBC unit. Following this process, students will:
 - ◇ use an Inquiry Question to guide their reading
 - ◇ mark details that help them answer this question
 - ◇ select details that seem most relevant
 - ◇ record their thoughts and connections
 - ◇ make a claim they have come to from their analysis that answers their Inquiry Question
- Work through the tool as a class. Model close reading to answer Inquiry Questions using [Text #7 from the Topic Resource Repository](#).

CLOSE READING OF SOURCES IN SMALL GROUPS

- Select one of the common sources previously read in class and an Inquiry Question from your list that the source addresses.
- Have students work in small groups to close read the source using the Inquiry Question and the Forming EBC tool.
- Support students as they work, helping them select details that relate to the Inquiry Question, make connections among them and write a claim that answers the Inquiry Question.
- Read and comment on volunteer student groups' work and discuss the process again as a class.

Teachers can choose to have students work across several days in class, alternating work in small groups and as a class, reading closely and analyzing a number of common sources. [Questions to guide close reading can be found in the Research Topic Repository](#).

ACTIVITY 1: READING SOURCES CLOSELY (CONT'D)

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

INDEPENDENT CLOSE READING OF SOURCES

- Select a common source and an Inquiry Question from your list that the source addresses.
- Have students work independently to close read the source using the Inquiry Question and the Analyzing Sources tool, supporting them as they work.
- As a class, share and discuss the EBCs developed independently, and have students take notes of each other's EBCs to complete their personal Research Portfolios.

ORGANIZING THE RESEARCH PORTFOLIO

- Instruct students to store all their notes and handouts in SECTION 2 of their Research Portfolios: Gathering and Analyzing Information.

ACTIVITY 2: WRITING EVIDENCE-BASED CLAIMS ABOUT SOURCES

Students develop evidence-based claims on some of the common sources using their notes and annotations.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

At this point, students will have analyzed several sources. They now develop a few written evidence-based claims addressing some of their Inquiry Questions, based on their analyzed sources.

WRITING EVIDENCE-BASED CLAIMS AS A CLASS

- As a class, pick one of the Forming EBC tools that contains their analysis of a source based on an Inquiry Question.
- Review the Forming EBC tool and discuss the claim and how it is supported by the selected details.
- Based on the Forming EBC tool, develop the claim into a written paragraph as a class.
 - ◇ The paragraph should state and explain the claim, and incorporate evidence through direct quote and paraphrase to support it.
 - ◇ Proper transitional phrases and citations should be included.
 - ◇ After the class has drafted an initial EBC, guide students in using the EBC Criteria Checklist and Writing Evidence-Based Claims to support revision of their evidence-based claims, and the Connecting Ideas handout if they need support integrating transitional phrases.

WRITING EVIDENCE-BASED CLAIMS IN SMALL GROUPS

- Pick common sources, and have students work in groups to review the corresponding Forming EBC tools and to write evidence-based claims.
- Support students as they work and orient them to the handouts for help.
- Read and comment on volunteer student groups' paragraphs, using the handouts to analyze, discuss and improve the work.
- Model the process again as a class if necessary.

ACTIVITY 2: WRITING EVIDENCE-BASED CLAIMS ABOUT SOURCES (CONT'D)

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

WRITING EVIDENCE-BASED CLAIMS INDEPENDENTLY

- Pick a common source, and have students work independently to review the corresponding Forming EBC tools and to write an evidence-based claim.
- Support students as they work and orient them to the handouts for help.
- Read and comment on volunteer students' paragraphs, using the handouts to analyze, discuss and improve the work.

ORGANIZING THE RESEARCH PORTFOLIO

- Instruct students to store all their notes and handouts in SECTION 2 of their Research Portfolios: Gathering and Analyzing Information.

ACTIVITY 3: DISCUSSING UNDERSTANDING OF THE AREA OF INVESTIGATION

Students share with the class the evidence-based claims they have developed independently on the common sources and discuss their understanding of the Area of Investigation.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

SHARING EVIDENCE-BASED CLAIMS

- Have students read the EBCs they have developed independently.
- Discuss them as a class.
- Students take notes. You may also photocopy some of the most relevant EBCs so that all students can include them in their personal Research Portfolios.

DISCUSSING UNDERSTANDING OF THE AREA OF INVESTIGATION

- As a class, discuss the information gathered and analyzed so far.
- Encourage students to express their understanding of the Area of Investigation based on the information gathered. At this point, they should not yet focus on their personal perspective, but rather how the information they have gathered and the analysis they have performed of the sources have helped expand and deepen their knowledge and their understanding of the Area of Investigation.

ORGANIZING THE RESEARCH PORTFOLIO

- Instruct students to store all their notes and their peers' EBCs in SECTION 2 of their Research Portfolios: Gathering and Analyzing Information. Recommend that they group together all the EBCs that address the same Inquiry Question.



ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

In this part of the unit students will have produced:

- ◇ Forming EBC tools
- ◇ Annotated common texts
- ◇ Written Evidence-Based Claims

Evaluate these products, as well as their participation and discussion using the Research Criteria Matrix.

For Part 3, examine student products and performance for ability in the following criteria:

- Posing Inquiry Questions
- Monitoring and evaluating progress
- Assessing sources for credibility and relevance
- Paraphrasing, quoting and referencing sources
- Annotating texts and noting connections and observations
- Reorganizing information based on deepening understanding
- Analyzing sources for inquiry purposes
- Evaluating sources for evidence, claims, and arguments
- Identifying fallacious or unsupported reasoning
- Demonstrating understanding
- Supporting claims

PART 4

FINALIZING INQUIRY

OBJECTIVE:

Students analyze and evaluate their material with respect to their Inquiry Questions and refine their inquiry. By the end of Part 4, students will have an analyzed body of research addressing their Inquiry Questions from which to develop and communicate an evidence-based perspective on the Area of Investigation.



ACTIVITIES

1- ADDRESSING AN INQUIRY QUESTION

The class chooses an Inquiry Question. Students review their notes and analysis and discuss how they address that Inquiry Question.

2- ORGANIZING EVIDENCE

Students organize their notes and EBCs, establishing connections to address each of their Inquiry Questions.

3- EVALUATING RESEARCH

Students review and discuss their Inquiry Questions and researched materials to determine relevance, coherence, and sufficiency.

4- REFINING INQUIRY

Students refine their scope of inquiry based on the research evaluation.

MATERIALS:

Forming EBC
Organizing EBC
Synthesizing EBC
Connecting Ideas Handout
Research Evaluation Checklist
Research Criteria Matrix



ALIGNMENT TO CCSS

TARGETED STANDARD(S):

W.6.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

W.6.7: Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.

W.6.8: Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources; assess the credibility of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and providing basic bibliographic information for sources.

W.6.9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

RI.6.7: Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.

RI.6.9: Compare and contrast one author's presentation of events with that of another.

RI.6.10: By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

SUPPORTING STANDARD(S):

W.6.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

W.6.5: With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach. **RI.6.1:** Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. **RI.6.2:** Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments. **RI.6.4:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings. **RI.6.6:** Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text. **SL.6.1:** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

ACTIVITY 1: ADDRESSING AN INQUIRY QUESTION

The class chooses an Inquiry Question. Students review their notes and analysis and discuss how they address that Inquiry Question.

ORGANIZING EBC TOOL

The **ORGANIZING EVIDENCE-BASED CLAIMS** tool has been introduced in the Making Evidence-Based Claims unit. It helps students organize results of their findings, including their personal claims and the key ideas and information they have identified in the sources, into a more general claim that synthesizes their findings. Using one or more ORGANIZING EBC tools, students will be able to organize the necessary information to help them in the process of writing synthesizing claims for their Inquiry Questions.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

- Have students pick one of their Inquiry Questions.
- Students should review all their notes, annotated sources, and Forming EBC tools looking for information addressing this Inquiry Question, and mark them (with a particular color or other code).
- Then, using an Organizing EBC tool to organize the most relevant information, they develop a Synthesizing EBC Tool that addresses that question. The EBC Criteria Checklist can be used for support.
- Alternatively, students can also use a Forming EBC tool to build multi-source claims .
- Based on their Organizing EBC or Forming EBC tool, students develop an appropriate claim that addresses their Inquiry Question into a written paragraph.
- The paragraph should state and explain the claim, and incorporate evidence through direct quote and paraphrase to support it.
- Proper transitional phrases and citations should be included. Connecting Ideas can be used for support.
- Students write their claims in the Synthesizing EBC tool.

ACTIVITY 2: ORGANIZING EVIDENCE

Students organize their notes and EBCs, establishing connections to address each of their Inquiry Questions.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

- Once students have had the experience of organizing and writing evidence-based claims to address an Inquiry Question, they should review and organize their research to address all the others.
- Have students develop Organizing EBC tools to address each of their Inquiry Questions.
- Students can do this activity independently, in pairs, or can be broken up into small groups that each focus on a different Inquiry Question and then report back to the class.
- Depending on organization of evidence, students may develop multiple claims to address some of their Inquiry Questions.

Emphasis here is on forming claims and organizing evidence; it is not necessary for them to write out paragraphs for each one.

ORGANIZING THE RESEARCH PORTFOLIO

- Instruct students to store all their Organizing EBC and Synthesizing EBC tools in SECTION 3 of their Research Portfolios: Drawing Conclusions.



ACTIVITY 3: EVALUATING RESEARCH

Students review and discuss their Inquiry Questions and researched materials to determine relevance, coherence, and sufficiency.

RESEARCH EVALUATION CHECKLIST

The **RESEARCH EVALUATION CHECKLIST** helps teachers and students evaluate their research. The checklist articulates specific criteria to use as a basis for evaluation and conversation throughout the inquiry process.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

Review of research is an essential step in completing a successful research cycle.

- Have students prepare for class by organizing their Research Portfolios and reviewing their claims addressing each Inquiry Question.
- Lead a class discussion to determine relevance, coherence, and sufficiency of the researched materials. Use the Research Evaluation Checklist to evaluate the material and the following questions to guide the discussion:
 - ◇ What have you learned about the Area of Investigation?
 - ◇ What was interesting to you?
 - ◇ What new information does the class need to find to more fully address the Inquiry Questions?
 - ◇ Why new Inquiry Questions should be explored based on the researched information?
 - ◇ What was not clear to you?
 - ◇ What more would you like to know about the area of investigation?
 - ◇ Do you have other comments or suggestions that you think would help improve this work?



ACTIVITY 4: REFINING INQUIRY

Students refine their scope of inquiry based on the research evaluation.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

Based on the Research Evaluation, students identify how they can refine their scope of inquiry.

REVISING INQUIRY QUESTIONS

- In small groups or independently, they revise at least one of their questions or develop at least one new Inquiry Question to address the identified gaps in information or perspectives, and to verify or replace information deemed untrustworthy.
- Students submit revised Inquiry Questions for the teacher to review.



ACTIVITY 4: REFINING INQUIRY (CONT'D)

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

FINDING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Using approaches and materials outlined in Parts 2 and 3, students go back to the common texts to find and analyze new information to address their revised Inquiry Questions. This work should be filed in SECTION 2 of the Research Portfolio.
- Students revise EBCs that were deemed unsupported and develop new ones that address additional Inquiry Questions. This work should be filed in SECTION 3 of the Research Portfolio.
- In the process, students may also identify whether more source material is needed. Explain to students that the scope of this research project does not include searching for additional sources, but that researchers should be able to determine when more information is needed. Teacher should find additional sources if necessary to address new Inquiry Questions.



ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

In this part of the unit students will have produced:

- ◇ Forming EBC tools
- ◇ Annotated common texts
- ◇ Written Evidence-Based Claims
- ◇ Organizing EBC tools
- ◇ Revised Inquiry Questions
- ◇ Taking Notes tools

Evaluate these products, as well as their participation and discussion using the Research Criteria Matrix.

For Part 4, examine student products and performance for ability in the following criteria:

- Posing Inquiry Questions
- Monitoring and evaluating progress
- Assessing sources for credibility and relevance
- Assessing/comparing perspectives and bias
- Paraphrasing, quoting and referencing sources
- Annotating texts and noting connections and observations
- Reorganizing information based on deepening understanding
- Analyzing sources for inquiry purposes
- Evaluating sources for evidence, claims, and arguments
- Identifying fallacious or unsupported reasoning
- Demonstrating understanding
- Supporting claims
- Collaborating and responding to feedback
- Refocusing inquiry.

PART 5

DEVELOPING AND COMMUNICATING AN EVIDENCE-BASED PERSPECTIVE

OBJECTIVE:

Students draw from the research and their personal analysis to develop and communicate an evidence-based perspective. By the end of Part 5, students will have an organized body of research and have written an evidence-based perspective on the Area of Investigation.

ACTIVITIES

1- REVIEWING RESEARCH PORTFOLIOS

Students review their Research Portfolios and organize the evidence in preparation for final analysis.

2- EXPRESSING AN EVIDENCE-BASED PERSPECTIVE

Based on their claims for each Inquiry Question, students write a final EBC explaining their perspective on the Area of Investigation.

3- WRITING A BIBLIOGRAPHY

Students use their Potential Sources tool to write bibliographies listing all their sources.

MATERIALS:

Organizing EBC
Evidence-Based Perspective
EBC Criteria Checklist
Connecting Ideas Handout
Research Criteria Matrix

ALIGNMENT TO CCSS

TARGETED STANDARD(S):

W.6.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content. **W.6.4:** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. **W.6.5:** With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach. **W.6.7:** Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate. **W.6.8:** Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources; assess the credibility of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and providing basic bibliographic information for sources. **W.6.9:** Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. **RI.6.7:** Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue. **RI.6.9:** Compare and contrast one author's presentation of events with that of another. **RI.6.10:** By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

SUPPORTING STANDARD(S):

RI.6.1: Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. **RI.6.2:** Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments. **RI.6.4:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings. **RI.6.6:** Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text.

ACTIVITY 1: REVIEWING RESEARCH PORTFOLIOS

Students review their Research Portfolios and organize the evidence in preparation for final analysis.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

After refining their inquiry, students organize their Research Portfolios in preparation for crafting their evidence-based perspective. Section 2 should be complete, containing all the sources, annotated copies, notes and EBCs made by the students during Parts 2-4. The portfolios should also contain Organizing EBC tools for each Inquiry Question that synthesize information across its Inquiry Questions. The claims addressing at least one of the Inquiry Questions should be written out. The claims addressing these Inquiry Questions become the first part of Section 3 of their portfolios and form the basis of their evidence-based perspective on their Area of Investigation.

ACTIVITY 2: EXPRESSING AN EVIDENCE-BASED PERSPECTIVE

Based on their claims for each Inquiry Question, students write a final EBC explaining their perspective on the Area of Investigation.

EVIDENCE-BASED PERSPECTIVE

The **EVIDENCE-BASED PERSPECTIVE** is a written expression of the personal conclusions and perspectives drawn by the students from their research. It results from the analysis of the outcomes of the research, organized and supported by the claims they have developed for each of their Inquiry Questions. Drawing from their Organizing EBCs, students write a synthesizing account of their findings, expressing their perspective and supporting it with evidence and reasoning.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

- Have students draw from their Research Portfolios to write roughly a one-page synthesis expressing and supporting their perspective on their Areas of Investigation.
- The Writing EBC and the Connecting Ideas handouts can be used.
- These written perspectives should clearly and logically express their perspective, but do not need to fully summarize all of their research. The purpose of this writing is to develop their perspective based on their research. This perspective can then support the development of larger products by incorporating and explaining their entire body of research.
- Students should paraphrase and quote with proper citation the evidence they do use in crafting their perspectives.
- Students can write their perspectives as an in-class writing assignment for which they have prepared by organizing and finalizing their research portfolios.
- After teacher review, students can revise their writing inside or outside of class.



ACTIVITY 3: WRITING A BIBLIOGRAPHY

Students use their Potential Sources tool to write bibliographies listing all their sources.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

As part of their evidence-based perspective and to complete their Research Portfolios, students write a one or two page bibliography of all their sources. Students can work from their Potential Sources tools, transferring the relevant information. Teachers should use the bibliographic format they prefer and provide direct instruction for students on formatting their information accordingly.



ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

After students have completed Part 5, teachers are able to assess if students have been able to successfully conclude a cycle of research. Many aspects of the proficiency can and should be assessed. The Research Portfolio can be used as evidence for the development of the full range of criteria expressed in the Research Criteria Matrix for all central areas of proficiency:

1. Setting direction for inquiry and research
2. Managing and evaluating research processes
3. Assessing sources
4. Analyzing/integrating/synthesizing Information
5. Recording and organizing Information
6. Developing and communicating an evidence-based perspective