

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.