

## Writing and Research

Sometimes when you write, you need to do research to learn more information about your topic. You can do research in the library, on the Internet, and by viewing or listening to information media.

### Library Reference

**Encyclopedias** contain basic facts, background information, and suggestions for additional research.

**Biographical references** provide brief life histories of famous people in many different fields.

**Almanacs** contain facts and statistics about many subjects, including government, world history, geography, entertainment, business, and sports.

**Periodicals** are past editions of magazines. Use a periodical index to find articles on your topic.

**Vertical files** contain pamphlets on a wide variety of topics.

 **Electronic databases** provide quick access to information on many topics.

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To prepare to teach this section, have examples of different reference materials on hand to share with students. Read aloud the introduction as students follow along in their books.

### Library Reference

Read aloud the description of each item. For each item, ask students, *What kind of information would you look up in this reference?* Write these ideas on the board and have students copy the lists for each type of reference.

**Scaffolding** Tell students to imagine they are doing a research project and looking for specific information. Write the list of required information on the board. Have students identify what reference sources they might use to find this information.

1. *When did dinosaurs live? What are some different kinds of dinosaurs?* encyclopedia
2. *What are the capital cities of every country in Africa?* almanac, electronic database
3. *When was the telephone invented, and who invented it?* encyclopedia
4. *What are some winter holidays that people celebrate in different parts of the world?* almanac, electronic database
5. *Who was Marco Polo, and where did he travel?* biographical reference, encyclopedia, electronic database

**Cooperative Grouping** Tell students they will help plan a Scavenger Hunt for information at the library. Ask students to come up with ten research questions similar to those listed under Scaffolding. You may want to reserve a specific time at the school library or local public library for the Scavenger Hunt. Guidelines for this activity follow.

- At the library, you or the librarian may want to take the students on a tour of where they can find research resources.
- Working in pairs, students should find research sources and answer each question.
- Give students a specific amount of time in which to complete the activity.
- Back in the classroom, review the research sources and the answers.
- You may wish to award prizes to student pairs with the highest number of correct answers.

## Citing Sources

Before you review this section with students, find examples of student research papers that include bibliographies and works cited lists.

Read aloud the material on citing sources as students follow along in their books. Show students the examples of bibliographies and works cited lists in research papers written by other students. Ask students, *Why is it important to cite sources when you write a research paper?* Possible answers are listed below:

- To give credit to people for their ideas and writing.
- People who read my paper will know I used a variety of sources.
- If someone wants to get more information on a topic, they can read a source I cited at the end of the paper.

## Plagiarism

Read aloud the definition of *plagiarism* as students follow along. Discuss why plagiarism is considered a serious offense. Tell students the rules in your school regarding plagiarism. Review ways to avoid plagiarizing when working on a research paper:

- Read the research, think about it, and write down the ideas in your own words.
- Do not copy exact sentences or paragraphs from research sources, unless you are going to quote a source.
- When doing Internet research, do not copy and paste information from your source into your notes or your paper (unless you are using a direct quote). Write the information in your own words.
- Avoid depending on one or two people's ideas for your paper. Make sure you use several different sources of information.
- When you are done writing your paper, read it out loud. Do the words sound like your own words, or do they sound like someone else wrote it?

### Citing Sources

When you do research, you read what other people wrote. The material you research is called the source or reference. When you tell who wrote the material, this is called citing the source. It is important to cite each source you use when you write.

In your paper, note each place in which you use a source. At the end of the paper, provide a list that gives details about all your sources. A bibliography and a works cited list are two types of source lists.

- A **bibliography** provides a listing of all the material you used during your research.
- A **works cited list** shows the sources you have quoted in your paper.

### Plagiarism

Plagiarism is presenting someone else's words, ideas, or work as your own. If the idea or words are not yours, be sure to give credit by citing the source in your work. It is a serious offense to plagiarize.

Look at the chart of the Modern Language Association (MLA). Use this format for citing sources. This is the most common format for papers written by middle and high school students, as well as college students.

### MLA Style for Listing Sources

<b>Book</b>	Pyles, Thomas. <i>The Origins and Development of the English Language</i> . 2nd ed. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1971.
<b>Signed article in a magazine</b>	Gustaitis, Joseph. "The Sticky History of Chewing Gum." <i>American History</i> Oct. 1998: 30–38.
<b>Filmstrips, slide programs, videocassettes, DVDs</b>	<i>The Diary of Anne Frank</i> . Dir. George Stevens. Perf. Millie Perkins, Shelly Winters, Joseph Schildkraut, Lou Jacobi, and Richard Beymer. Twentieth Century Fox, 1959.
<b>Internet</b>	<i>National Association of Chewing Gum Manufacturers</i> . 19 Dec. 1999. < <a href="http://www.longmancornerstone.com">http://www.longmancornerstone.com</a> > [Indicate the date you found the information.]
<b>Newspaper</b>	Thurrow, Roger. "South Africans Who Fought for Sanctions Now Scrap for Investors." <i>Wall Street Journal</i> 11 Feb. 2000.
<b>Personal interview</b>	Smith, Jane. Personal interview. 10 Feb. 2000.

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**Scaffolding** To help students better understand the kind of information that is included in each type of citation, you may wish to have them look at a magazine and fill in the following information:

#### Magazine citation

Author (last name, first name):

Title of magazine article (in quotation marks):

Name of magazine (in italics or underlined):

Date of magazine:

Volume number:

Repeat this exercise for other sources, such as newspapers and Internet sources.

**Modern Language Association Style for Listing Sources** Tell students that the Modern Language Association (MLA) is an organization for language teachers and professors. Explain that the MLA has made a special set of rules for writing and using words. Many students and teachers use the MLA rules when they write papers.

You may want to mention that when students do research, they may see works cited in a style that differs from the MLA. That's because some writers use other style guidelines. Two leading examples include *The Chicago Manual of Style*, published by the University of Chicago and used by many publishers, and *The Associated Press Stylebook*, which is used by many journalists.

In the MLA style chart, read aloud the citation for each type of source as students follow along. Explain the specific information provided in each type of citation. For example, for "Book," you may want to explain as follows:

Pyles, Thomas . . . . .	author
<i>The Origins and . . . . .</i> <i>Development of the English</i> <i>language</i>	title
second . . . . .	edition
New York . . . . .	place it was published
Harcourt Brace . . . . .	Publishing company
1971 . . . . .	Year of publishing

Since many students will start their research by using encyclopedias, you may want to show them how to cite this type of source. Write the following entry on the board and have students copy it into their notebooks.

Bergman, P.G. "Relativity." *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*. 15th ed. 1987.