

Our Research Project

Project step I:

1. Find three or four classmates you want to work with. A good team includes people with a variety of skills, not everyone must be a grammar expert to be a good team member. Also think of skills like good time-management, computer and lay-outing skills, finding resources, acting, creative thinking, etc.
2. Find a topic you are all interested in and brainstorm what this topic could include. Think of possible products for the project presentation. In your project each of you is expected to produce one oral and two written contributions. Make a preliminary project plan and decide who is responsible for the individual subtopics. Present your working title and project ideas to the plenary.

Topic: Fill in the general topic of your group project. Then write down at least five **questions** that you are going to answer in your project. Who is going to work on which sub-topics?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Product: How are you going to present your project results?
(project folder, poster presentation, scetch, song, game, audio or videotape,)

Audience: Who is going to be your audience? What message do you want to leave with your audience? Do you want them to learn something new? Do you want them to have fun and enjoy your presentation?

Materials/ Information needed:

List all the materials you will need during your project. Where and how are you going to find the necessary information?

3. Homework:

Collect information materials for your project and bring them to class on Print out pages from the internet, bring books or magazines, brochures, videos, tapes, or any other information you find interesting.

Project step II:

Work in your project group and share the materials you have brought. Choose one text and subtopic you want to work on today (one text per person) and do the following tasks.

1. **KWLW chart:** This acronym stands for the following words:

Know (what you **know** already)

Want (what you **want** to find out)

Learn (what you have **learned**)

Where you found the information

You'll need three sheets to do this exercise.

K:

On the first sheet list what you already **KNOW** about the topic. The best way to do this is to write about your topic for ten minutes without planning or stopping. You know this technique of *free-writing* from reading diaries. Try it out here. The text you'll produce will be a very good starting point for your project.

W:

On the second sheet you list all the questions about the topic that you **want to know** more about.

L :

Now you will have to research the missing facts. Read your info texts using your questions as a guide. Then write down what you have **learned**. Use the colored *Research Sheet* for this step.

W:

Write **where** you found the answers to your questions. (book, title, page number, exact internet address...) Use your *Research sheet*.

Research Sheet

Name:	Date:
Subject of Research:	
My notes (in my own words ¹):	

Quotations: If you want to use one or two phrases directly from your source, put them in quotation marks and copy them here. Note the exact place where you found them. (Author, title, page, date)

¹ When taking notes use your own words as much as possible. It is ok to **copy short expressions (3-5 words)** from your input texts. This will help you improve your vocabulary. It is, however, not acceptable to steal whole sentences from your original.

Useful phrases and expressions

In order to expand your vocabulary in this specific area of your interest collect a page full of useful expressions. Your phrases should be between 3 to 8 words long. Such meaningful chunks can be remembered more easily than single words. Highlight the main expression you want to remember.

Examples:

a **cunning fox** (ein schlauer Fuchs),
to **conjure up enough courage** (genug Mut aufbringen),
to stem something:
He couldn't **stem the sobs** that shook him.
He tried to **stem the bleeding**. (to stop)
they paid a **staggering sum** for the painting (a surprisingly high sum)



Step III: Sharing your findings

Share your findings in your group. Always keep all the group members informed about your progress. Take turns to sum up the information you found in your homework. Each of you should speak non-stop for AT LEAST one minute.

Step IV: More research

Repeat the tasks of steps II and III. Read one or two more input texts , take notes on a research sheet and select a few vocabulary items you want to remember. Meet again in your group to share your findings orally.

Step V: Writing the first draft

Use the information you have collected so far to write your first text. Before you start writing consider the following points:

- Who is your audience?
- What is your aim? Do you want to inform, to persuade, to entertain...?
- What are your main points?
- In what order are you going to present your main points?
- What is your conclusion?
- How are you going to arouse your readers' interest? Find a fitting title and write a catchy lead.

Step VI: Peer conferencing and revising

Type your first draft (12 pt, double line spacing) and bring it to class on the

Ask two of your group members to read your draft and give you written feedback.

Discuss the comments and suggestions for improvement in your group.

Revise carefully at home.

Repeat the above steps and write a second text for your project folder.

Step VII: Planning and preparing your presentations

It is now time to get ready for your group presentation.

A: Project Folder: Your project folder must include a nice title page, a table of contents, an editorial letter and two contributions per group member.

B: Your oral presentation can take many forms. Decide in your group how you can best present your results. Be creative and make your presentation as interesting as possible. Each group member must take an active role in the presentation.