

**Using the Big6 for a Research Paper** (The Big6 strategy can also be used for problem solving or task completion)

Numbers 1-5 should be filled in before starting search, taking notes, or writing a paper.  
Number 6 should be completed before the paper is turned in.

**#1 Task Definition** – What is the purpose of the assignment and what kind of information is needed to complete the task (paper)?

A research paper involves more than rewriting facts found from multiple resources. It should not be a summary or paraphrase of another’s work. In order to present your own critical thinking, interpretation, or insight regarding a topic, you must generate an essential question (thesis) to investigate and then draw your own conclusions. The six steps below provide a framework to aid you in the research to final presentation process.

My **essential question** (thesis) is:

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Often students select topics that are too large in scope and discover the information on their topic or essential question is overwhelming and impossible to organize. To avoid this problem it is helpful to narrow the focus of the topic by asking questions that will analyze and/or support the essential question. It is likewise of value to ask questions from the four types of questions (memory, convergent, divergent, and evaluative) to cover the whole range of information from simple facts to critical thinking about the information.

**What questions** can I think of in order to find information with which **to answer my essential question?**  
(More questions will be generated as you begin your research)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

**#2 Information Seeking Strategies**

Brainstorm and think of all possible sources of information to answer the essential question. List below.

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List the best sources of information for this task (answering the essential question)

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If websites are used, only reputable ones will be sought from links within databases or from lists generated by instructors or librarians. I agree Disagree (circle one)

(Ask your instructor or a librarian for assistance if you need help with step #2)

**#3 Location and Access** Locating information sources and finding the information within them.

Check those I will use. (Using the library is especially important for this step. Human sources such as subject experts are also useful for interviews, etc.)

- CCCC Library                       Public Library                       Personal Library
- Instructors                       Databases                       Search Engines (Google, etc.)
- Websites of reputable educational, governmental, and historical institutions or associations
- Other library resources via Interlibrary loan                       Subject experts

For books categorized by the **Library of Congress** in academic collections identify some relevant **Subject Terms** (authorized words tagged to concepts/subjects/topics) here. Ask librarian for help if needed.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

For database (basic searches) and/or search engine searching, list some **Keywords** to use here.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**#4 Using the Information Checklist** - Engaging (reading, listening, feeling, viewing, etc.) sources of information effectively and extracting relevant information to answer the essential question.

- check table of contents and indexes in books                       record citation information from sources
- take notes on cards or online (w. source id)                       take notes using an organizer or plan
- create an outline of points to be presented                       gather graphs, maps, diagrams, images if needed
- examine sources cited at the end of books, chapters, or articles for more sources                       use media (DVD, audio, tape, video, camera)

Giving credit: Use the \_\_\_\_\_ style manual for Sources Cited page and for Parenthetical References

**#5 Synthesis** - Integrating and organizing information to write, record, or present

written paper  oral presentation  Powerpoint  Video  DVD  audio tape

For **written paper**, how will I give credit to sources?  Sources cited  Parenthetical references

Are footnotes required? \_\_\_\_\_ What margins are required? \_\_\_\_\_ No. of pages? \_\_\_\_\_

Are there special instructions for the title page? \_\_\_\_\_ Spacing? \_\_\_\_\_ Headings? \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructor's Timeline** for Assignment

Task definition (thesis statement or essential question) due by \_\_\_\_\_

Source Search and Citation list for instructor approval due by \_\_\_\_\_

Information Search (using the information/outline) due by \_\_\_\_\_

Outline of paper due by \_\_\_\_\_ First draft due by \_\_\_\_\_ Final paper due by \_\_\_\_\_

**#6 Evaluation** -- A possible Checklist before turning in the paper.

This paper answers my essential question and represents my own ideas, insights, conclusions.

I have proofread my paper for grammar, sentence structure, spelling, typos, etc.

The writing is clear and logical.

I have not plagiarized and not represented the ideas/work of others.

I have completed the requirements and special directives of my instructor.

Proper credit has been given to my sources and presented in the correct \_\_\_\_\_ style.

A title page and sources cited page are included.

I am well pleased with my paper and would be willing for anyone to read it.

NOTE: Formal **Evaluation occurs** when you receive a grade for the paper. Evaluation also occurs when you need to go back to re-do one or more of the other steps as required by an instructor. It occurs when you decide to edit, redirect an idea or section in the paper, need to do more research and add content, or re-arrange the content of the paper.

As you do a few of these organizational forms, **the process will become easier** because your thinking will follow a plan. Writing papers and making presentations will be much more **organized and faster** because you will internalize this infrastructure upon which to write or present your thoughts.

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