

5.3 Library Scavenger Hunt

This activity develops research skills. This introductory research activity makes using research techniques into a competitive game. You will need to make a trip to your school (or local) library for this activity. This activity is best suited to students who have been oriented to research techniques but need more practice employing them for a research project.

Time Allotment

One class period

Objectives

By the end of this activity, students will:

- be introduced to using multiple methods of research to find information on a variety of topics.
- practice finding evidence that supports a given argument.

Materials and Preparation

You will need access to a library, and a prepared list of items for each group to find in the library. See suggestions below. You could bring a small prize for the winning teams (optional).

Creating scavenger hunt lists:

You may wish to create a different, but similar list for each pair or small group of students so everyone is not trying to get the same things at once. Each list should require that students utilize a variety of searching techniques to find the items. Search techniques include the library catalogue system for books, an electronic database or print index (such as the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature*) for periodicals, the internet search engines, etc. Items on the list should include a variety of topics, and can require that students find articles that support a particular position. For example, an item may be "An editorial from a national newspaper from the last 6 months in favor of gun control legislation" or "An article from a scientific journal that supports the theory of global warming."

Method

Before the activity begins, students should have a basic knowledge of what resources are available at the library to help them find different types of material. You may wish to give a brief orientation or review at before the activity begins. This activity also works ideally as a follow-up to an introduction by the librarian.

Divide the class into groups or pairs and pass out the scavenger hunt lists. Explain to students that you will clarify the meaning of any items on the list, but will not help them find items (it is a contest, after all!).

Come up with a system to check whether the items teams find are correct. You may have teams place items on a table as they find them. If they do, you can check over the materials as teams find them.

The team that finds all the items on their list first, or the team with the most items at the end of the period, wins the game. You may want to give out second and/or third place to keep the activity going longer and so all the students have more time to practice finding items.