PRACTICAL RESEARCH TIPS

Successful research requires thinking and planning. To help ensure your success, this research guide will help participants tackle tough research questions.

Select your Topic/Prompt

Begin by selecting a bioenergy topic and prompt that you are interested in learning about. If you are not familiar with the topic, start gathering background information by exploring encyclopedias, dictionaries, or scholarly web sites.

Plan Your Research Strategy

Use the graphical organizers for teachers at the BioenergizeME website and see the U.S. Library of Congress suggestions: https://www.loc.gov/rr/scitech/SciRef-Guides/bioenergizeme-strategy.html

Select Scholarly Resources

Evaluate the credibility of your resources and make sure they are "scholarly," which generally means they are written by experts in the field and are vetted for accuracy and scientific rigor via accepted scholarly publishing standards, such as peer review or editorial processes.

Suggested key words, subject headings, and/or search phrases: "peer review" or "editorial process" and "evaluating resources"

Internet Research

Picking internet resources from an internet browser list gives no guarantee of credibility, but it can be used to guide you to resources that are published by experts or by established institutions who are interested in providing reliable public knowledge. You may use web-based encyclopedias, like Wikipedia, to learn about your topic and find credible resources, but they should not be cited as credible resources in your infographic.

Search Tips

Suggested key words, subject headings, and search phrases can be useful when searching databases and the internet. Some are provided in Section 3 of this toolkit and on the BioenergizeME website.

Suggested key words, subject headings, and/or search phrases: "finding and evaluating resources"

Research Aids
Suggested key words, subject headings, and search phrases are included throughout this toolkit to assist users in finding credible research sources. Insert these words or phrases into the URL address bar or web browser search field.

Cite your Research Resources
Learn how to, and make it a priority to, respect the intellectual property rights of those who produced the information you are researching. Be consistent in following the citation guidelines your teacher requires, or learn a new citation method.

Suggested key words, subject headings, and/or search phrases: APA, MLA, AP Stylebook, Chicago Manual of Style

Persistence and Networking
Demonstrate resilience by pursuing information in spite of challenges. Use social networks and other tools to explore your topic. Learn appropriate information-sharing skills and avoid plagiarism.

Suggested key words, subject headings, and/or search phrases: "research skills for students"

Consult with a Reference Librarian
Get expert research guidance from a reference librarian at your school, public or college library, or the U.S. Library of Congress. Reference librarians can help identify useful keywords, subject headings, and search phrases, as well as provide guidance on taking research notes and evaluating and citing your sources.

Budget your Time and Have Fun!
Remember to balance your time between research and infographic development. Selecting a topic area/prompt that you are interested in will make your research and your infographic more engaging.