Research information

In most of your other subjects, you probably learn information that the teacher gives you. In Global Perspectives, you will learn how to find and collect your own information. You will learn two main skills:

- How to identify what information you need
- How to collect and select information

Identifying what information you need

To start with, you will work with your teacher and your class to choose a topic, an issue, and a question about it. Deciding on a question will help you focus on a small part of the topic. Then you will think about the kind of information that will help you answer the question, and where to find that information. Let’s look at an example:

![Diagram showing different questions related to family and demographics]

**Figure 2a** What questions can I ask about the topic of family and demographics?

One way of thinking about the kind of information you need is to have a class discussion and share ideas.

**Activity 1**

(a) Set some rules for class discussions. For example, one rule might be “We must listen to other people’s ideas.”

(b) “What differences are there between families in my country and families in another country?” Have a class discussion about the sort of information you need to find. What questions can help you?

(c) “What would happen if we took babies away from their families and gave them a standard upbringing?” Discuss what you think would happen. How is this question different from the question in (b)?
Figure 2b shows some more specific questions that will help us search for information and ideas.

**Activity 2**

(a) Choose one of the following questions about the topic of sport and recreation. Have a discussion in your class or group to decide what information you might need to help you answer it. You could draw a diagram or table to help you.

(i) What do national sports say about a country?

(ii) Is sport just a “man thing”?

(iii) Are darts, motor racing, and chess sports?

(iv) Can international competitions help improve understanding between peoples?

(b) Choose from either humans and other species or education. Work in your group to break the topic down into smaller questions. Think about the sort of information you might need to help you answer the questions. Use diagrams or tables to help you.

**Remember**

Rules for class discussions apply to group discussions too! Be respectful and polite to one another. Listening and thinking about what you hear can be more important than talking.
What kind of answers do I need?

Before you do an Internet search for the answers, you need to think about the sort of answers, information, and ideas you need. They might be:

- definitions
- facts
- opinions
- value judgments
- predictions.

Let’s look at some examples:

**What is a family?**

The answer to this question could be a definition. But it’s not actually a very interesting question, is it?

**What proportion of families are extended families?**

A number or fact might answer this question. But then you have to ask some more questions: does extended mean with grandparents, aunts, uncles, or cousins? Is a family consisting of a grandmother, a mother, and a daughter an extended family or a single-parent family? How do we find out, from the millions of people in the country, what sort of families people live in? We can see that this question is not as simple as it seems.

**How are families in China and the UK different from one another?**

Some of the answers to this question are simple facts. For example, China has had a one-child policy for many years, so many Chinese children do not have brothers, sisters, aunts, or uncles. In the UK most children do have these relatives. In China, children are expected to obey and respect their parents. In the UK, most parents don’t demand the same level of obedience and respect. But these simple facts don’t really tell you much about the differences. What does it feel like not to have brothers or sisters? What effect does this have on family dynamics, people’s behaviour, and the country? To answer this question properly, you need people’s opinions and feelings as well as just the facts.

**Why are families in China and the UK different from one another?**

This question requires an explanation that deals with causes and consequences. Facts from history might explain some of the differences, but you have to consider how they link together as well.

**Will changing divorce rates have a negative effect on the country?**

First of all, this is a question about the future, so we don’t have facts to answer this question. We have to make predictions. Secondly, this is a complex question. The answer depends on many things, such as welfare costs, the effects on children’s education, and the effects on people’s attitudes. Thirdly, it might be just a matter of opinion and value judgment whether these effects are positive or negative. For example, some people think that all children need two
parents, and others believe that one happy parent is better than two unhappy parents. Your opinion about this will change how you answer the question.

These examples show there are many different types of answers to questions. You’ll look at them in more detail during the course. For now, you just need to think about getting the right kind of answer to your questions. A definition or a simple fact will not answer a complicated question.

### Activity 3

What sort of answers do you need for the following questions?

(a) What is a national sport?

(b) What is the national sport of Bhutan?

(c) What is education? (Think carefully about this one – is it really a simple definition?)

(d) Why is education necessary?

(e) What would be the best sort of education?

(f) What other species live in your country?

(g) Why does it matter if a species becomes extinct?

### Finding the answers

**Internet search terms**

You have now thought about what sort of information you want. This will help you structure your Internet search to find this information.

- Be precise.
- Target your search terms to what you want to know.
- Add the name of a country, e.g. “family values + Singapore” or “family values + USA”.
- Change your search terms if necessary.
- Look at the titles of the pages you find. Do they look as if they will answer your questions? If not, change your search terms.

### Activity 4

In this activity, do not read the text on the sites you find. Scan the pages quickly to decide whether you think they will help you answer the questions in Figures 2a and 2b.

(a) Put “family” into your search engine. What sort of sites do you find?

(b) Put “family values” into your search engine. What sort of sites do you find?

(c) Put “effect divorce family values” into your search engine. What sort of sites do you find?

(d) Discuss in class which of these sites you expect to be more helpful in answering the questions in Figures 2a and 2b. How did you make this judgment?