

Second Grade -Challenging Standards English and Language Arts

201.1.8 Understand and spell basic words that sound the same but are spelled differently and have different meanings (homophones- flower/flour).

GLE 0201.4.2 Gather relevant information to answer a research question.

GLE 0201.4.3 Write a simple research report.

✓ **0201.4.7** Write a simple research report that demonstrates a gathering of information.

These suggestions for doing research with young children were gathered from Doug Prouty - dprouty@cccoc.k12.ca.us -Contra Costa County Office of Education, Pleasant Hill, CA

These are suggested steps for developing a guided research project in the lower elementary grades.

1. What do they know?
2. Fill in the Gaps
3. Establish a Desired Understanding
4. Where, What and Who can help us?
5. Explain Assignment and begin Guided Research
6. Discuss Findings, Organize Info, Produce and Share Product
7. What Did They Learn?

Let's illustrate this proposed process with a typical example from 2nd grade. If we assign a report on spiders, in the first step, "What do they know?" we can ask students what they know about the animals' diet, their living environment, and their climate. We might also ask them to complete a KWL chart as a group or to do a compare and contrast chart by comparing them to insects.

Step 2 requires us to "Fill in the Gaps." This is the area where we may need to bring out picture books, books, posters, and other resources. This is where we might integrate a streaming video of spiders (off United Streaming, if you are a subscriber), images from the Web and maybe even a field trip to a nature center.

Step 3 is where we define what we want to learn about. Here we want to arrive at an "essential question" that the research is centered on. Students should even contribute and come to a question such as, "How do spiders live and survive in the different parts of the world?"

“Why don’t spiders stick to their own web?” There is a lot of focus on basing research assignments around important questions. This is an important step that is often left out.

Step 4 is where we get the kids thinking about how we can answer this question. In other words, Where, What and Who can help us? What resources do we have available? Will we automatically just go to the **Web** or is our **librarian** a good source? Are there **experts** available? We will also want to take this opportunity to teach students the first steps of Web searching. What are our keywords? What types of Web sites might help?

Step 5 finally brings us to the assignment. We wait until now to introduce the requirements, expectations and even the rubric. Students are so naturally inquisitive at this age that they won’t even realize that there is an assignment involved. Giving the assignment at this stage now frames the requirements and allows them to start gathering and processing information.

Step 6 entails discussing, organizing, and sharing what students have found. This may be a whole class process or small group. Students will need to discuss their findings and develop ways to organize the gathered information. Programs like Kidspiration or paper-based graphic organizers will allow them to group and categorize. Based on the assignment, they may also be required to create a write-up and present their findings and conclusions. Most importantly, they will need to answer their essential question.

Finally in Step 7, we assess what students have learned. This is done in so many ways that I don’t need to elaborate here.

I would add a Step 8. Although Step 6 alludes to the sharing, I would somehow/someway see that there was a way to display students’ results where others can see. That would be a motivational tool to help them be ready for the next research project.