

Developing an Inquiry Plan

Once groups have established their inquiry question(s), they will next need to move to making a plan in order to proceed in a productive and efficient manner. In this lesson students will be provided with an Inquiry Plan (BLM) to assist them in organizing their thinking and establishing the next logical step in their inquiry.

Time: 25 minutes

Materials:

- chart paper and markers, or interactive whiteboard
- **Inquiry Plan BLM** One per group

Grouping: whole class and inquiry groups

Procedure:

1. Provide each inquiry group with a copy of the **Inquiry Plan BLM**, and have them complete box one and two with the group members' names and their inquiry question(s).
2. Explain to students that these initial boxes provide a starting point for their inquiry project and help to establish a focus for the group.
3. Have students reflect on prior experiences with inquiry projects by brainstorming processes they utilized in addressing prior inquiry question(s). Record students' ideas on chart paper or an interactive whiteboard for future reference. Support students brainstorming by asking probing questions such as:
 - What types of resources will you need to assist you in answering your question(s)?
 - What role(s) in the inquiry will each member of the group be responsible for?
 - How will you divide your time during this inquiry?
 - How will you keep track of your gathered information?
 - Who is your audience for this inquiry?
 - How will you share your information?
 - How will you know that you have answered your inquiry question(s)?

Think about other times when you have had to find out information about a question you had or a topic that you were investigating. Think about how this inquiry helped you to better understand what you were trying to find out. Was there anything in particular that made the task easy? Was there something that you tried that you wouldn't try again? When we reflect on our past experiences, it helps us do a better job the next time we try that type of task.

4. After students have shared as a whole group, invite inquiry groups to complete the third box of the inquiry plan. Remind students of the group norms they established as they work towards completing this section of the inquiry plan.

Now I need you to think about where you are going to look to find the information and data you need to answer your inquiry question(s). There are many places to find answers, but what are the best ones for your question(s)? Would you look at a non-fiction book about your topic or search the Internet to find out information? Could you interview an expert on the topic, or would it help to listen to a podcast that relates to your topic? As a group, jot down in the final box what resources you think you might need to answer your inquiry question(s).

5. While students are in their inquiry groups, have them record in the final box materials that they believe they will require to meet the needs of their inquiry. As groups complete this task, invite them to share their ideas with the whole class. As the groups are sharing, encourage them to jot down additional ideas that would support their inquiry.

6. After students have completed their inquiry plan, have them review what they have developed and make any necessary additions. Students should place their plan in a predetermined location so that it is easily accessible throughout their inquiry.

Teaching Tip: Remind students that this is a beginning plan for their inquiry and that there may be changes as they get deeper into their inquiry. Therefore students should not feel that they cannot veer from this plan if they discover additional questions, resources, and/or materials to help them do their best work.