

Inquiry Mini-Lessons

Possible Ways to Gather Information

In order to find answers to a question, it is important to find all possible resources for gathering information. This lesson will help students to think about different resources they can use in their inquiry.

Time: 30 minutes

Materials:

- a variety of different resources, including some from the school library, to model
- “Ways to Find Information” chart developed during an inquiry unit
- chart paper and marker

Grouping: whole class or small group

Procedure:

1. Tell students that you will be discussing various ways to find answers to their questions.

2. Chart various resources students can use to find answers and read the chart together. The “Ways to Find Information” chart created during an inquiry unit could be displayed at this point.

When we worked on our inquiry unit, we had a chart that we called “Ways to Find Information.” Let’s look at that chart and discuss what else we could add to it.

If a chart was not created, brainstorm ideas with students. Various resources that could be on the list include articles in books or magazines, fiction, info-fiction and non-fiction books, Websites, pictures, interviews, audio materials, DVDs, field trips, discussion with experts, and community events.

Let’s think of all the places that we might find answers to the questions we have.

3. Discuss and brainstorm with students where these resources could be found, e.g., school library, community library, community businesses, Websites, telephone listings, and community resource lists. There may be others in your area as well.

4. Next, organize students into groups of four or five. Provide each group with a question and examples of various resources brought into the classroom or available on Websites for them to peruse and discuss how these might or might not connect with their inquiry question.

If I want to know how to take care of a cat, then I need to look at all the resources that are available to see if they have information on cats and their needs. I’m going to choose several books to read and choose a Website to learn more about this topic. In your groups, decide which sources might help you answer your question and talk about them with your group members.

5. Hold a class discussion to discuss what each group found.
6. If you're working on a whole-class inquiry, ask students to choose their resources to explore the class inquiry question. Students can share their resources with a partner and discuss their choices.

Teaching Tip: If students are researching in small groups, pairs, or individually, ask them to go back to their own inquiry question and discuss which of the possible resources could be used to find information.