

Research



Research is like a funnel, it starts very wide and then becomes more narrowly focussed as you refine your RQ and ideas. Eventually, it becomes quite specialised.



Research stages overlap and are not always sequential!

At each stage of the process you must * check with your teacher * before proceeding to the next research stage.



Stage 1: Research Focus

- Brainstorm aspects of music that you are interested in; this can be quite random, but brainstorm something you are passionate about, as that way you are much more likely to complete the research.
- Start writing possible research questions (RQ). Use:
 - w-word
 - topic
 - angle
- Your RQ must be researchable!
- **Now * and get approval before continuing.**

Stage 2: Literature review (the big picture)

- In this context 'literature' means: articles, books, YouTube, written or recorded interviews, magazines, music, newspapers, opinion pieces.....
- You are searching to see what already exists and for ideas that can help inform your RQ.
- What do you already have? Know? Need? Start from here.
- You search places like databases (EPIC) and Google Scholar to help you find things. The Librarian can be really helpful at this point. Also, depending on your topic, your music teacher often has access to specialist music books.
- Use your keywords from your RQ in different combinations.
- Print/ get hardcopies of materials wherever possible. Keep these in a file or folder – you will need to hand them in as supporting materials.
- Make sure you keep accurate referencing notes (APA) from now on, as this is critical for your *References* in your final presentation. (A requirement of the standard.)
- Highlight, or make notes of ideas, quotes etc. that take your interest and which are relevant to your RQ. (It's easy to get side tracked as you follow something fascinating...but irrelevant! That's half the fun of research!!!)
- Use reference lists in what you are reviewing to take you to other items
- Review everything you have.....is your RQ still relevant?
- **Now * and discuss what you have found so far.**

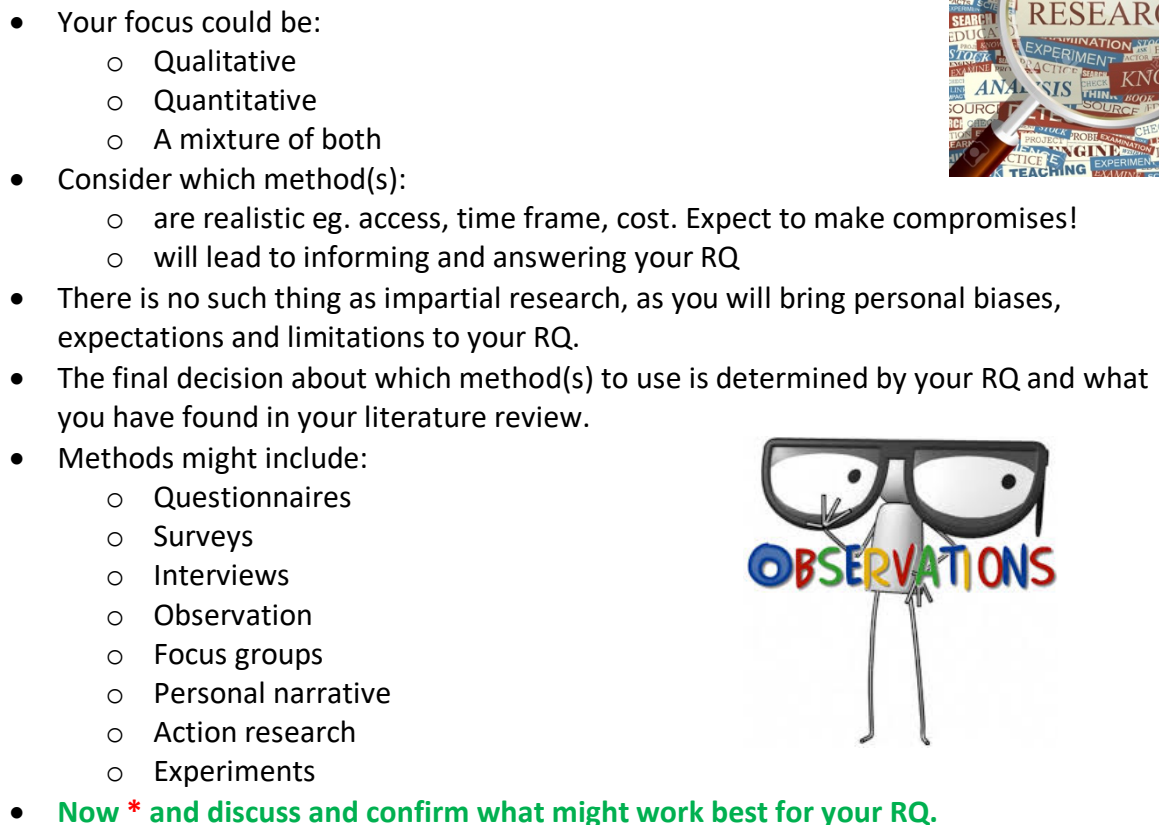


Literature Review

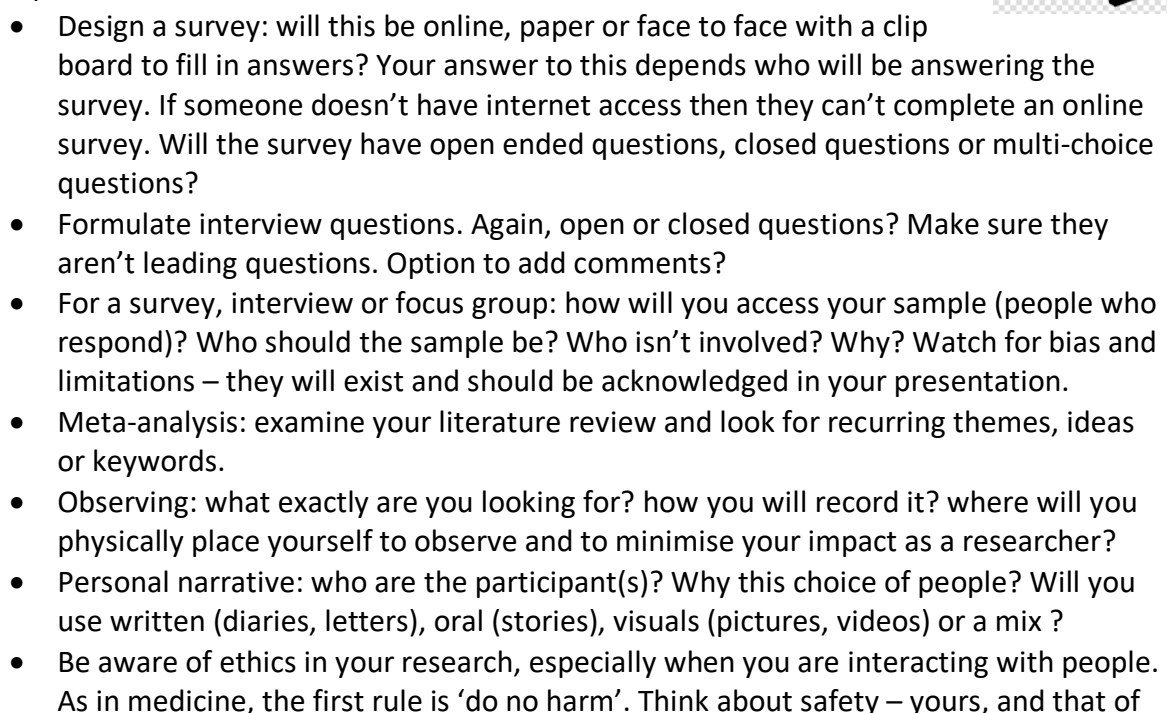
Note:

- The literature review doesn't stop at this point. As you get further into your topic you will probably find other useful things, but the pace definitely slows down.

This is where you take your key learning from your literature review, refer to your RQ and start refining how you will do YOUR research. This may also include tweaking or changing your RQ!



With your method(s) decided, you now start working out in detail as to what else you will gather to give you the data you need to answer your RQ. For example:



participants. Keep well away from illegal areas eg. asking about the use of drugs in music circles (though an analysis of drug references in song lyrics is probably OK), or requests for private information that people are likely to lie about, or be embarrassed about.

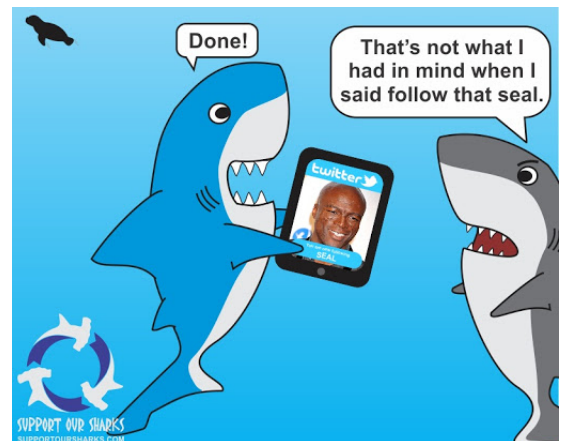
- With participants, your sample size is usually a trade-off between an accessible group, an optimal size and the resources available to do the research.
- **Do a detailed draft of your data collection design then ***

Stage 5: Data Gathering

The fun part of research, where it starts to become real!

You should always trial or pilot your survey, interview, observation method etc. before unleashing it on the world! That way, you iron out any issues and can make changes.

- It's virtually impossible to design a questionnaire where all the questions can only be interpreted in one way.... Using careful wording you can, however, minimise this. This is particularly important when you might not be able to go back and clarify what someone means.
- Trial or pilot your data gathering with 1-2 people who will not be involved in your research proper and then critique your design.
- **Now * and discuss what you have discovered and what changes you might need to make.**



- When working with participants in research, consent is critical. For a survey, where you stand in the street and ask passers-by, consent is implied if they stop and answer your question(s) - though you will need a short blurb that clearly sets out who you are, what your survey is for and what the information gathered will be used for.
- However with interviews, observations and questionnaires, where there is a closer relationship between the researcher and participant, a formal process to obtain consent needs to be followed. This covers areas such as:
 - confidentiality
 - anonymity
 - storing data safely
 - access to the data (usually just you and your teacher, who is your supervisor)
 - a signed consent form
 - withdrawing from the research
 - how any complaints or concerns will be dealt with
- Your teacher has a template letter which you can adapt to your particular research.
- **Now * and get approval to send out your consent form; keep these on file as they are returned to you.**



Yes! This is a significant milestone along the way.....

Data gathering is exciting and fun.

- Remember to keep your data safe and locked away.

Stage 6: Analysing your data

Analysis is about inspecting your data and using logical and analytical reasoning to examine, describe, interpret, review, condense and evaluate what it is telling you. The goal is to come up with meaningful insights about your RQ. Is your RQ still the right question to ask?!

- **Now * and based on what the data is telling you, discuss what might be the best ways to synthesise the insights you have found.**

How you synthesise your data depends on what methods you have used to gather it. These could include:

- Tables
- Graphs
- Diagrams
- Thematic discussion
- Quotes
- Images
- Annotated music extracts
- Descriptions
- Audio extracts
- Statistics (ranking, scores, rates of change, frequency, range, correlations)



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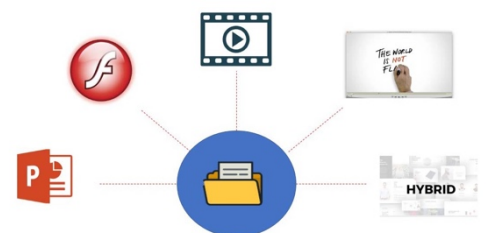
Stage 7: Organizing your findings

As you analyse your data you can also be writing up your findings. These can then be woven together into your presentation at a later stage. The format you choose for your presentation will relate to how you analyse your data.

- **Now * who will comment on what you have written so far.**

Stage 8: Presentation formats

- You will present your research in the way that best suits your RQ and your research method(s) and data analysis. For example, you could use a
 - Report
 - Seminar
 - Power point (with supplementary notes)
 - Live performance (with annotated score)
 - Recording
 - Documentary
 - Website
 - Mix of formats



Different Presentation Formats

- **Now * and decide which format(s) will work best for you.**
- Your task states that the equivalent of **1500-2000** words is recommended.
- To keep the presentation of your research short and focussed, you have to be quite ruthless about what you do include....this will only be small amount of what you have actually found – in other words, only the most critical information will find its way into your final presentation.

Stage 9: Presentation contents

There is a standard format for how research is presented and, in general, you should follow this outline.



- **Introduction**
 - The **introduction** state your research question, why it is of interest and what you are aiming to find out (1 paragraph)
 - Summarise the **key ideas from your literature review** ie. what other people have said (several paragraphs)
- **Methods**
 - State your **research methods**; include the limitations of the methods you chose (1-2 paragraphs)
 - How you **gathered the data**; include ethics and consent if applicable (1-2 paragraphs)
 - How you **analysed your data** eg. thematic analysis, statistical analysis (1-2 paragraphs)
- **Results**
 - **Discussion** of your results, significant findings. Include quotes, tables, music extracts, illustrations, interview extracts etc as applicable to your method(s). (This is the body of your presentation.)
- **Conclusions**
 - Your **conclusion(s)** need to be justified from your data gathering. Did your study meet its aims? Have you answered your research question?! You may not have found what you expected to (and that is OK). Any implications or suggestions from your findings which might impact practices? (1/2–1 page)
- **Future steps (optional)**
 - **Recommendations** for possible future areas for research on this topic (1–2 paragraphs)
- **References**
 - List your references using **APA referencing**. You need to show you have processed relevant evidence from a range of sources.
 - Any **appendices**, that is, any relevant and necessary materials not included elsewhere eg. survey questions, interview questions, participant consent form, raw data, tables
- Read your presentation aloud (not silently!) – is it clear, concise and coherent? Every word should be ‘necessary’!
- **At least 10 school days before the deadline * and have your presentation critiqued before making final changes.**

CONGRATULATIONS!