Doing research

A space to help young people plan to do research

Introduction

If you are a young person interested in research this **Doing Research** journal is for you. It can help you:

- Identify a topic or question you would like to research
- Find support you might need to research the topic
- Work with other co-researchers to do the research

There are thinking activities and places to collect your thoughts. Spare planning sheets a Research Diary can be found at the end of the journal and on the OUR VOICES website to download.

This journal works with two websites: **OUR VOICES** and **MY SHOUT.**

OUR VOICES provides lots of information and asks questions which can help you to think about doing research. By recording your answers in this journal you can plan and prepare to take part in a piece of research.

MY SHOUT provides more information for young people thinking of leading their own research topic.

You will find reminders in your journal to visit these two websites for more information.

The Open University

BODY • MIND • MEDIA
CENTRE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S WELLBEING

CHILDREN'S RESEARCH CENTRE

Doing research
What is research?

Most research is led by adults.

Bringing young peoples' viewpoints to research might provide new ideas and perhaps better research.

What is research?

Research uses a thorough and well thought through plan to understand or discover something such as:

- **an answer to a question that no one yet knows**, e.g., [does digital media use affect children and young people's sleep? If so, in what way?]
- **a topic no one knows much about**, e.g., [what are young people's views of data privacy in the digital world?]
- **whether new, current facts or answers can be found**, e.g., [what are young people's views of social media personalised advertising?]

Think about and note - you might be interested in research that:

Finds an answer to a question – Is there something you have already been wondering about? These are questions often associated with our day-to-day lives.

Increases your knowledge about a topic – Is there something you are already interested in and would like to explore further? These questions are often linked to things beyond our day-to-day experiences.

Uncovers new information for everyone – These sorts of topics are often led by whole organisations trying to find ways of improving the lives of whole communities.

Doing research
What do I want to do?

You can get involved in research in a range of different ways:

Helping people with their research

This research is often about what young people think or feel about something.

Young people are sources of information for adults who do the research.

GO TO the OUR VOICES website - 'Helping others research' to learn how you can get the most out of helping other people do research.

Doing research with someone else

Sometimes adults and young people share an interest in a topic. Young people become co-researchers, sharing the responsibility for the research and the way it is done.

Young people are experts in their own lives. They can have special insights especially if the topic is about young people or something which affects them. They can guide adult researchers.

GO TO the next page to learn how you can co-research a topic which interests you.

Leading your own research

Young people are capable of leading their own research.

This kind of research is often about the things that most matter to young people.

GO TO the My Shout website to find out:

- What makes a good research question
- Choose a good method of investigation
- Go about collecting and analysing data properly
- Sharing the results of your research

Doing research
Why take part in research?

There are good reasons for young people to do research:

- To improve research about young people's issues
- To take up your rights as a young person in your community
- To get your views listened to
- To develop confidence to help improve your community.

Young people have also reported having fun and developing new skills whilst doing research.

Look at this word cloud made up of things other young people have said about doing research and circle any things that which interest you too:

Before moving on go to OUR VOICES website and look at some of the 'Examples of research with and by children and young people' or listen to 'What children say about doing research'. Then carry on to think about 'Why you want to do some research'.

Doing research
Why I want to do some research

Use the questions and tick boxes below to think about your ideas for research

Think about the things that young people have said in the word cloud on the previous page and in the examples of research you may have looked at on the OUR VOICES website. Now think about your own reasons for wanting to do some research.

When we looked at WHAT research we learnt that it was a well-planned and organised approach to finding things out. Recording your reasons for taking part in research is a good idea because it will:

- Help you remember the purpose of your research
- Keep you focused on what you want to achieve by doing the research
- Enable you to share your ideas with other people

You can record your reasons in different ways. For instance, you could put key words to remind you of reasons in the boxes below, or make quick notes in the space below. Alternatively, you could audio record your ideas on something like a mobile phone, tablet or iPad.

Key words /ideas

Why I want to do some research:

GO TO: the next page to think about what is involved in 'Choosing my research topic'.

Doing research
Choosing my research topic

Use the questions and tick boxes below to think about your ideas for research

1. Are you curious about something that you have noticed? (Circle any that apply)

- ▫ At school/college?
- ▫ In your youth group; sports / music or other clubs?
- ▫ At home?
- ▫ In social media?
- ▫ From talk with friends?
- ▫ On TV or radio?

Or any other place or activity? ..... (Write it here)

2. What are you curious about? Did something:

- ▫ Confuse you?
- ▫ Make you angry or please you?
- ▫ Give you ideas?

This could be your topic for research. Write a few words to remind you what you found interesting / annoying / strange etc:

.....

.....

3. What would you like to do about your topic of interest? (Circle what you are interested in doing)

- ▫ Find out more about it?
- ▫ Change or challenge something about it?
- ▫ Create something new?

Something else ..... (Note it down here)

4. Are you interested in other people's ideas and opinions?
(Circle people you are interested in working with)

- ▫ Teachers
- ▫ Schoolfriends
- ▫ Other friends
- ▫ Sports coaches
- ▫ Activity leaders
- ▫ Parents / family members / carers
- ▫ Other people? List them here:

.....

.....

Now, put your research idea in the box below
Don't worry if you are not completely sure. Your research ideas will change and develop as you plan what you want to do.)

My Research Idea

You could fill in the gaps here:

I am curious about .....

Which I noticed .....

I would like to .....

I would like to know what ..... **feel(s) about this.**

Or write your own research question here:
(You can go to 'My Shout: Writing my research question' for further help and ideas)

.....

.....

You may now have some ideas about a topic you would like to research - even the start of a research question.

It is time to think about 'HOW' you could research your topic.

▶ **GO TO** OUR VOICES and watch the video 'How to involve young people in research.'

▶ **THEN GO TO** *Preparing to be a co-researcher* in this journal

Doing research
Preparing to be a co-researcher

You may have a question/topic that you would like to have researched OR you may have been asked to help someone else with their research question/topic

In both cases preparing to take part in research as a member of the research team can help you:

- Get what you want from the experience of being part of the research
- Understand and feel comfortable about your role in the research
- Get your views heard and acknowledged
- Feel confident about the way the research is being done
- To be confident about the results of the research

"I have been asked to help someone with their research"

- What do you know about the people doing the research?
- Do you understand what the research is about?
- What is your role in the research?
- Who is going to see the research and the information you share?
- How long will the research take?
- How much time will you have to give to the research?
- What if you don't have the time any more?
- **GO TO** 'Helping Others Research" on the website

"I would like to work with someone to research my question/topic"

- Who could help you do research to find out more?
- How would you like to be involved in the research?
- What would you like to do?
- Would you like to share the results of your research with anyone? Who?
- How would you like to share the results of your research?

GO TO: OUR VOICES What is research to get started, **THEN** return to the next page in this journal

Doing research
Working with others on my topic

I would like to work with someone to research my question/topic.

Think about the research you want to do to start planning who you could ask for help.

Write your research question / topic here:

.....

.....

Doing research takes people's time and energy. You may need to make a case to persuade people to help you research your topic. Think about the following aspects to build your case and show how worthwhile it would be.

Who or what organisations might be interested in your topic?

.....

.....

Why might they be interested? What might they learn or gain from researching the topic with you?

.....

.....

Who could you approach to help you get their interest?

.....

People you ask to help will want to know about your research and how you would like them to help you. They may not be experts in doing research themselves and will want to know that the research you want to do is done properly.

GO TO OUR VOICES and watch the video TRREEE principles for good research.

Doing research
The help I need

Think about the help that you need to do carry out your research.

You may need different sorts of help at different times in your research. That may mean you need different people with different skills and knowledge to help you at different stages of your research.

The help I need to get started:

Think about the help you need to get started. Use the grid below to tick things you need help with. Add other things to the list that may be special to your research topic/ question. Then add the name or sort of person (e.g. youth leader, parent etc) who could help you.

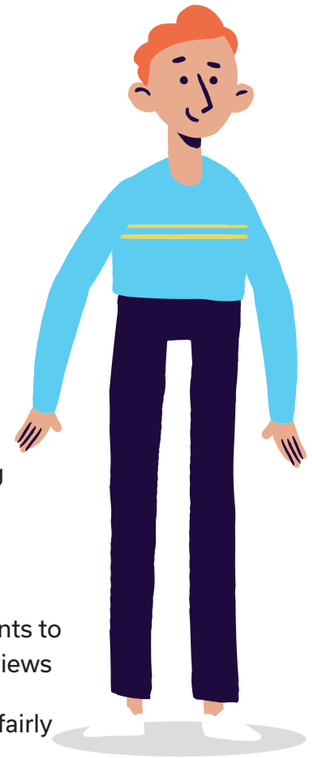
I need help to ...	Tick if this applies to your research	A person who could help
Prepare my research idea / question		
Decide what data I need to answer my question		
Work out how to get the data I need		
Contact people who can provide me with data I need		
Add other things you need help with to get started here:		

Not all the adults you ask to help will be experienced in doing research. They will want to know that the research you do will be done properly and ethically (i.e. in a way that looks after the young people and children who participate and others who might be affected by what you find out).

GO TO: OUR VOICES, watch the video and read about the TRREEE principles for good research

THEN you can **GO TO**: Getting started: planning your research

Doing research
Getting started



- **Thinking about what makes 'Good research'**
- **Preparing a 'Good research question'**

Good research is:

Relevant – it is worthwhile doing and supports children and young people's lives

Thorough – it is well-planned and well organised

Critical – it uses different sorts of evidence from different viewpoints to support the findings and minimise bias e.g. the researcher's own views

Ethical – it treats people involved in the research respectfully and fairly

If you are going to ask other young people to participate in your research, the research should look after their best interests and it should be interesting and not waste their time. Using the checklist of TRREEE principles below will help you to plan good research. You could discuss each of the points with an adult to help you think.

	Questions to ask yourself	Tick when you have discussed or thought about these aspects
Trust	How will I earn the trust of the people I ask to help me? How will I tell them about my research? What information do I need?	
Respect	How will I show that young people's views are respected and welcomed even if they don't match my views?	
Rights	Do I understand what rights young people have when they take part in research? A non-technical version of the rights of children and young people can be found on this website: https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/conventiontext- childrens-version How will this affect what I want to do?	
Ethics	How will I make sure young people are comfortable taking part in my research?	
Expertise	How will I show that young people's views are valued?	
Experience	How will I make taking part in my research enjoyable and worthwhile for my participants?	

Keeping a Record of your research activities

You will come back to the TRREEE principles many times whilst you plan and do your research. It is a good way to keep your research on track and make it 'Good Research'.

You could make notes in your research log book to help you develop your thinking. This could be actions that you have decided as part of your research plan or questions to discuss with someone else .

GO TO: Preparing a Good Research Question

Doing research
Preparing a good research question

Quantitative, Qualitative and Mixed research questions

There are different sorts of questions and research can have a mix of both. Look at the example below and see the way the same topic can be explored using different approaches.

Example topic: School Uniform

Type of research	What that research does	Sorts of research questions
Quantitative research questions	measure, compare and count things	*How many people in Year 11 want to wear school uniform?* *What percentage of girls compared to boys want to wear school uniform in this school?*
Qualitative research questions	ask people's views and understanding about things	*What do Year 11 pupils think about wearing school uniform?* *Why does wearing school uniform feel like to Year 11 pupils?*
Mixed research questions	might ask people's views about something and then count or compare how many others think that or think something else	*What are the main reasons pupils do and don't like wearing school uniform and does this change between Years 6 and 11?*

GO TO: OUR VOICES website: HOW/2. The nature of qualitative research questions for further information about qualitative research approaches.

A good research question

Whatever approach to your topic, a good research question is one that is:

- Clear and understandable
- Possible to answer
- SMART (i.e. Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time bound)

Using the SMART checklist below could help you prepare good research questions. You could discuss each of the points to help you think. Add notes here or start a research diary. There is an example of a Research Diary page at the end of this journal to use. You can also download further pages from the OUR VOICES website Resources section

GO TO: MY SHOUT to learn more about writing a research question Link here

	Questions to ask yourself	Tick /add notes when you have thought about these aspects
Specific	What EXACTLY do you need to know in order to answer your research question?	
Measurable	When will you know you have an answer? What sort of information will provide you with an answer?	
Achievable	Is it possible to find the sort of information you need to answer your question?	
Relevant	Is the answer to your question interesting to others? Does it make a difference?	
Time Bound	Can you get the information you need in the time you and the people participating have?	

Your research question is likely to change as you plan and then start your research. This shows that you are being thorough in your approach and adapting your questions as you learn more and develop your interest in the topic.

Your may also find that you develop more than one research question – but you should not have too many (generally up to 3 or 4). One good way to organise your research questions is to have one overall questions and some sub-questions which add more detail to the main question. See the example below:

Main question:
What do pupils in my school think about the compulsory school uniform policy?

Sub-questions:

- *Do girls and boys think the same way about uniform policy?*
- *Do different year groups think the same way about uniform policy?*

Keeping a note of your research questions in your research log can help you develop your thinking.

GO TO: The 'Developing research question' page at the end of the journal to note changes in your research question(s) at each stage of the research.

Once you have a 'good' starting research question you are ready to collect data to help you answer your questions.

GO TO: Data collection (next page)

Doing research
Data collection

You may have already considered WHAT sort of information – referred to as 'data' - you need to answer your research question. Now you also need to consider WHO has that data or WHERE that data might be found, HOW to collect it and prepare a data collection plan.

WHAT sort of data do you need?

This depends on your research question. Put simply you need information which will help you answer your research question. However, all research needs sufficient, reliable and relevant data to answer the research question.

Feature of the data collection	Description	Things to discuss / think about in your own research
Sufficient	When reporting the results of your research you must have enough data to support your findings. One person's view or one instance of something is rarely enough to answer to your research question. 'Enough' data will depend on the research question and the total instances or number of people experiencing the thing you are studying.	What is the size of the group of people I am interested in researching? (e.g. members of a family; just the girls or just the boys in a youth club class; a whole school class; a whole school?). How many of that group do I need to gather data from to be confident that I understand the likely views of the whole group?
Reliable	'Triangulation' is about collecting at least three pieces of information and/or information from at least three different sources / sorts of data. If you do this one piece of data or one sort / source of data could be faulty you could still have two pieces of information to support your findings. The data you collect must represent the true views of participants and the actual way things are.	How will you be able to judge if your data is reliable? Are the sources of data you are considering e.g. reports and surveys other people have done reliable? Did they use good methods to get the data; how old is the data?
Relevant	The data you collect must contribute to answering the research question precisely. For instance. Simply asking if a class of Year 11 pupils if they like the current school uniform does not precisely address the research question: "What do Year 11 pupils in this school think about wearing school uniform". Firstly, a straight YES or NO answer does not tell you anything more than their opinion about the current school uniform. Secondly you have no data about the broader range of thoughts about wearing school uniform generally. For instance, some may hate the current uniform but like the idea of a more modern uniform in a different colour.	What exact data will help you answer your research question?

GO TO: The Data Collection Plan at the end of this section and fill in the 'WHAT' section before you continue.

WHO has the data you need or WHERE might it be found?

There are often a range of people who may have the data you need. Data can be found in a range of places:, and can be collected from the people involved in your topic area either providing or using services.

Earlier in your journal (Working with others on my topic) you thought about the sort of people you would like to work with on your study. Now that you have thought more about your research you may have more ideas about people who could help you. Working, with others will increase the network of people you can learn from and seeking advice about your topic to improve your research.

GO TO: The Data Collection Plan at the end of this section and fill in the 'WHERE and WHO' section before you continue.

HOW will you collect your data?

There are different sorts and different sources of data that can help to answer your research question.

- Background data
- Primary (the main) data to generate answers to your research question.

Background data
Background data can be found most easily:

- In books, journals and magazines which publish articles about your topic
- On the internet provided by organisations and people who work in your topic area

This is general information about your topic. It may not specifically provide information which answers your research question, but it can help you prepare good research in other ways. For instance:

- It may show you different aspects of your topic you hadn't thought about
- You may find useful research others have already done
- Difficulties researching your topic might be highlighted
- You may find your research question has already been answered!

Try a simple search using the keywords 'school uniform' on the Google Scholar search engine which provides academic research articles. Firstly, notice this search delivered 4,190,000 results which tells you that you will need to refine your research terms! You can do this in lots of ways e.g. by specifying an interest in articles from only the last two years the number of results reduced to 33,600 – a lot less although still too many to help you find the information you are looking for! Secondly just the first four entries show the broad range of research that has been undertaken in this topic across a number of countries including:

- Policies about school uniform
- The effect of school uniform reducing gang activity; reducing family expenditure; making economic differences between children in school less apparent – as part of an American study
- Advantages and disadvantages of school uniform in East India

Try a quick online search engine search using key words from your research question. Looking at the range of existing research in your topic area may make you want to adjust your research question.

Primary data

Primary data is the data you think will be the most important source of information to answer your research question.

GO TO: The OUR VOICES website - HOW/3. Involving children and young people in all stages of research/Data collection

Think about data collection as building your knowledge to answer your research question. You can build your knowledge by:

- **Conducting surveys** – to count or measure something and/or find out people's views about something at a simple level
- **Interviewing others** – to find out about people's views about something at a more detailed level
- **Observing things about your topic** – to witness something about your topic yourself, to record what you have seen happen and the details about how, when, where and even why things happen

You can also involve the participants in the research by engaging them in gathering information about your research question which represents their views. This is sometimes particularly interesting for children and young people who can become actively involved in generating data with you:

- Using **creative methods** e.g. collecting video/photographic data; drawings and other creative activities

Using more than one method of collecting data

Using more than one method of data collection can be a good idea. Different methods of data collection:

- Can generate different sorts of data increasing the range of knowledge
- Appeal to different people. Offering variety might please participants and give them choices about the way they support your research
- Can be more or less successful so if one method of data collection does not generate much new knowledge then another might. It can help to triangulate your data and increase reliability.

GO TO: My Shout to find out about ways of:

- Designing a questionnaire/survey (Link)
- Conducting interviews (Link)
- Observing and recording what you observe (Link)

GO TO: The OUR VOICES website - HOW/3. Involving children and young people in all stages of research/Data collection tools in research to read about different ways of collecting data especially using creative ways of collecting data with other young people.

When you have explored the different ways of collecting data think about the best way of collecting the data you need from the people who have that data. Discuss this with an adult to see how they might be able to help. Then go to your 'Data collection plan' at the end of this section and fill in the final section about how you will collect your data.

Your data collection plan

Working through each of these considerations might help you to create your data collection plan and identify questions or things you might want to discuss have some help with. Start by writing your research question checking it against the SMART principles.

My Research Question: .....
.....
.....

Describe: **WHAT data you will collect?**	Check this data is:	The data I will collect:
	Sufficient?	
	Reliable?	
	Relevant?	
Describe: **WHERE you might find data** **WHO might provide data.**	WHERE: - Existing research? - Website?	I will search for data in the following places:
	WHO: - People involved in your topic already? - People who have an interest in your research question?	I will work with the following people:
Describe: **HOW you are going to collect your data**	Background data: - Articles or reports? - Website information?	I will collect data from the following specific journals/ reports /organisations and/or websites:
	Primary data - Surveys - Interviews - Observations - Creative methods	I will generate knowledge that will answer my research question by:
	Additional data - Surveys - Interviews - Observations - Creative methods	I will generate additional knowledge to support my primary data by:

Doing research
Creating your research plan

Now that you have planned your data collection you can prepare your overall research plan.

It is important to have a research plan because the people helping you with your research will want to know:

- What you want them to do
- When you want them to do it
- When they might hear about the results of the research they are helping with.

Good research has clear and achievable:

- Research questions
- Schedule of things to be done i.e.
  - Collecting data
  - Analysing data and
  - Reporting findings

A research plan does not need to be complicated. It just needs to show what you are going to do, in what order, and when you are going to do it. Preparing your plan will also make you think about what resources you need. The sorts of resources you might need include:

- Time: your time, your adult helper's time, your research participants' time
- Money and/or equipment: e.g. you may need a way of recording interviews, printing surveys, etc.
- People to help: in particular research participants.

Look at the example research plan at the end of this journal. That plan shows each of the tasks set out in this journal. There is a blank plan for you to complete for your own research. Adapt the plan so that it works for your research.

GO TO: The OUR VOICES website resources to download more pages for your plan or to update as you progress through your research

Before you start to collect data – return to the TRREEE principles

When you first started to think about the research you wanted to do you thought about what 'Good research' looks like (see page ?? of this journal).

GO TO: The OUR VOICES website and watch the animation to refresh your memory

If you made some notes about good research when you thought about it before:

GO TO: Your research logbook and see what ideas you had then.

'Good research' is research which participants **T**rust; **R**espects participants and recognises their **R**ights; is done **E**thically, values participants' **E**xpertise and ensures that participants have a good **E**xperience'.

One way in which you can show all these things is to tell people about your research. Researchers do this by preparing:

- A short, clear and interesting information sheet about their research
- Participant consent forms

Participant information sheets:

Participant information sheets should tell people thinking about being participants:

	What you can say in your information sheet
What the research is about	Share your research question. Explain very simply and briefly why the research is important e.g. what could happen as a result of the research.
Why the information they could give you is important	Participants need to be able to decide if it is worth their while To give their time to the research If they have information they think is useful and/or they can share with you

	What you can say in your information sheet
What you want to do with the information they provide	Participants must know what you will do with any information they give you and be assured that it will only be used for this reason before they agree to take part.
How you will keep their information confidential (private)	Participants must be confident that you have clear ways of ensuring that what they say is kept private. This means that their information is: ▫ Only seen by the people who need to see it (i.e. the research team) ▫ Anonymised as soon as possible i.e. is not linked to their name when used to tell people about the research ▫ Safely destroyed after the research is completed.
What the participants can do if they have concerns when they are taking part in the research	Participants have a right to change their minds about taking part in research. They should be told how they can withdraw from research and how they can withdraw any information they give from research if they change their mind about taking part.

Participant consent forms

It is important that participants understand what they are giving a researcher permission to do with their information. Researchers use consent forms which they ask people to fill in and sign to show they understand what the research is about.

If your participants are children (in the UK under 18 years old) then children will also need the permission of their parents/carers to take part in your research.

GO TO: The OUR VOICES website Resources section to look at examples of children and parent information sheets / letters and consent forms.

Now design your own information sheets and consent forms. Ask someone to test your sheets and forms to make sure they are clear for the participants.

Doing research
Data analysis

Once you have collected sufficient reliable data and stored it securely, you are ready to start to analyse your data. The purpose of analysis is to find information which might help you answer your research question(s).

GO TO: OUR VOICES website HOW/ Research methods: data analysis with young people to read about the way to explore your data.

How to explore your data

How you explore your data depends upon your research question and what you are trying to find out. You should already have some ideas about this because it will have shaped what data you collected and how you collected it.

GO TO: The Data collection section of this journal to remind yourself about what data you collected and why.

What does your research question need you to do?	What you might do	What your analysis might look like
Measure something	Order your data into similar groups of information and count the number of instances in each group.	Tables of figures against pieces of information in your data which help to answer your research question.
Compare things	Group information into separate sections that tell you different things related to the research question.	Separate summaries about what each section says with an overall statement which talks about the similarities and differences between the sections.
Examine relationships between things	Group information which appears to relate to each other and/or explain things about your research question..	A number of separate groupings of information that each contribute something towards answering your research question
Forecast something about a situation	Review your data to find individual or linked pieces of data which suggest a particular outcome	A set of statements about thet future linked to your research question supported by specific pieces of data from your overall set of data

GO TO: The OUR VOICES website and read more about data analysis which involves:

- counting and measuring (quantitative analysis)
- exploring or evaluating information collected (qualitative analysis)

Use the grid on the next page to plan how you are going to analyse your data. Write your research question first as this will help you to think about how you want to answer your research question.

Remember you may want to review your research question having seen the data you have collected. (**GO TO**: 'Preparing a good research question' in this journal to help you think about your research question).

Planning how to analyse your data

My research question:	
Aspects of the data I want to count or measure	
What I want to count/measure	**How** I want to count / measure the data
Aspects of the data I want to explore or explain	
What I want to explore / explain	**How** I want to explore / explain the data

Telling people what you found out

Having worked hard to discover new information and answer research questions it is really important to tell other people about the research. If you were curious about something or wanted to find something out, it is quite likely that someone else is curious about it too. Your researcher may want help to know what young people like you think about:

- Who should be told about the research with which you have helped
- What they should be told
- How they should be told

Who should be told about the research?

This depends on the research topic and research question. The following questions are useful to help you think about who should know about your research. Think about the following research project for instance:

At what age do young people in the UK believe they should have the right to vote for members of the UK Parliament, The Scottish Parliament, The Welsh Assembly or the Northern Ireland - and why?

Who do you think might:	**Who should be told about the research?**
Have something to gain from what has been found out?	***Young people*** *hoping to gain a vote earlier than they do currently.*
Be able to use the information that you have found?	***Teachers*** *interested in preparing young people to vote* ***Politicians*** *and their staff who may want to seek young people's votes*
Want to make changes to the way they do things if they had the information you have found?	***Political Party managers*** *who may want national elections to become more relevant to young people*
Be most affected by this new information?	***Potential new Parliamentary or Assembly members*** *seeking votes and young people especially those 15 to 18 years who might wish to vote.*

What should you tell people about the research?

There is usually a huge amount to tell people about a research project. Different people are interested in different things. Adults and young people are very busy and often only have limited time to spend on learning about new research. You need to decide what the most important things are that interest each of the different sorts of people you want to know about the research.

Think about the example research project again. Imagine that you have been one of five young people who have helped the researcher to design and carry out the research. Key findings of the research included:

1. The majority of young people across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland believed that young people should have the right to vote at age 15 years

2. Some young people are not at all interested in who is elected or how their country is run.

3. Other young people felt strongly that at 15 years old young people understood and could remember what it was like growing up as a child in their country and they had a lot of information from which adults would benefit.

4. Every young person who helped the researcher carry out the research:

   ▷ Felt their views had been valued and had made a difference to the way the research was done and what was found out.

   ▷ Said they learned more about the system of elected representatives and government of their countries

   ▷ Became more interested in the political governance of their country

5. Over half the adults who were interviewed for the research were positively surprised by the knowledge and understanding young people helping with the research had about the research process and research questions

6. Teachers interviewed as part of the research confirmed many young people had sufficient knowledge, understanding and interest in the electoral system to contribute positively with a right to vote.

7. 98% of elected parliamentary/assembly members' staff interviewed for the research felt that young people aged 15 years were too young to have the right to a vote

8. 95% of the young people interviewed felt that there was no chance of the right to vote age being lowered in the next 5 years

Who do you think would be most interested in each of these different findings? Here are some ideas about the possible different interests of some of the people.

What do different people want to know about the research?	
Young people hoping to gain a vote earlier than they do currently.	*Young people are likely to be interested in knowing that the majority of those interviewed thought 15 year olds should have the right to vote(1); that teachers thought they had sufficient knowledge and understanding to use a vote at this age (6) whilst nearly all parliamentary/ assembly members and their staff felt they did not.* *Young people may also be interested in knowing that their peers helping with the research had a positive experience (4) and feel more confident about the quality of the research..*
Teachers interested in preparing young people to vote	*Teachers are likely to be interested in other teachers' views on the rights to vote at 15 years (6) and also that some young people were not interested in elections and the governance of their country (2). This might lead to teachers encouraging young people's interest in national governance within school lessons.*
Politicians and their staff who may want to seek young people's votes and who may want national elections to become more relevant to young people	*Politicians and their staff may be interested to know teachers' views on young people's capability of having the right to vote as 15 years and also that 95% of those interviewed felt they had little chance of this happening in the near future. (8) This might give politicians more confidence in 15 year olds having vote. It might also alert them to the lack of confidence young people have in politicians making changes.* *Political party managers would be interested in elections and the governance of their country (2).*

How should you tell people about the research?

Having decided who you want to tell about the research and what particular findings you want to share with each of them, you need to choose the best way of telling them. The way to do this will be different for every type of person. Carrying on with this example for instance:

GO TO the OUR VOICES website to learn about the different ways you can tell people about research.

How should you tell people about the research?	
Young people hoping to gain a vote earlier than they do currently.	*Simple short facts about what young people think about this issue can be shared on social media sites and blogs.* *Short fact sheets can be emailed to groups campaigning for children's rights.* *Presentations can be made in school assemblies* *Posters, pictograms and infographics summarising key findings can be placed on notice boards and used to explain findings simply to younger children* *All forms of communication should include website addresses for further information*
Teachers interested in preparing young people to vote	*Articles in Teacher/Teaching Journals* *Papers in formal professional and academic journals* *Presentations and formal papers to teacher conferences*
Politicians and their staff who may want to seek young people's votes and who may want national elections to become more relevant to young people	*Personal meetings and interviews to share information and ask for politician's support to make changes suggested by the research.* *These can be supported with short fact sheets to leave with the people you meet.*

Plan for telling people about the findings from the research (dissemination of the research findings)

It is important to plan the way you are going to tell people about research. This will make sure the most important findings will reach the people who are most interested in the most effective way. Researchers will need help to know who young people want to share information from research with; what the most important findings are to young people and how it is best to communicate them.

Young people helping with research can also help to demonstrate how credible (believable) research findings are because they are experts at being a young person. They can do this by helping to write messages for social media, research posters and fact sheets. Young people can support or even make presentations of their own. Take a look at this example of a plan to tell people about the findings of our research project about 15 years olds' rights to a national electoral vote:

WHO you want to tell about the research	**WHAT particular points you want to tell them (including the ones you think will most interest them)**	**HOW you want to tell them about the research (the ways you think will be the best ways for them to take notice)**
Young People	• The majority of young people interviewed believed they should have the right to vote at age 15 years • Teachers interviewed confirmed many young people had sufficient knowledge, understanding and interest in the electoral system to contribute positively with a right to vote. • Every young person who helped the researcher carry out the research felt valued and that they made an important contribution; learned about and became more interested in the political governance of their country	Short social media and blog messaging. Targeted emailing of short fact sheets to Children's Rights campaigning groups Presentations to school assemblies; school clubs such as debating club etc. Posters, pictograms and infographics on school and youth notice All forms communications to carry blog address.

GO TO the next page to complete a plan for sharing findings from the research with which you have been helping.

Plan for telling people about the findings from the research

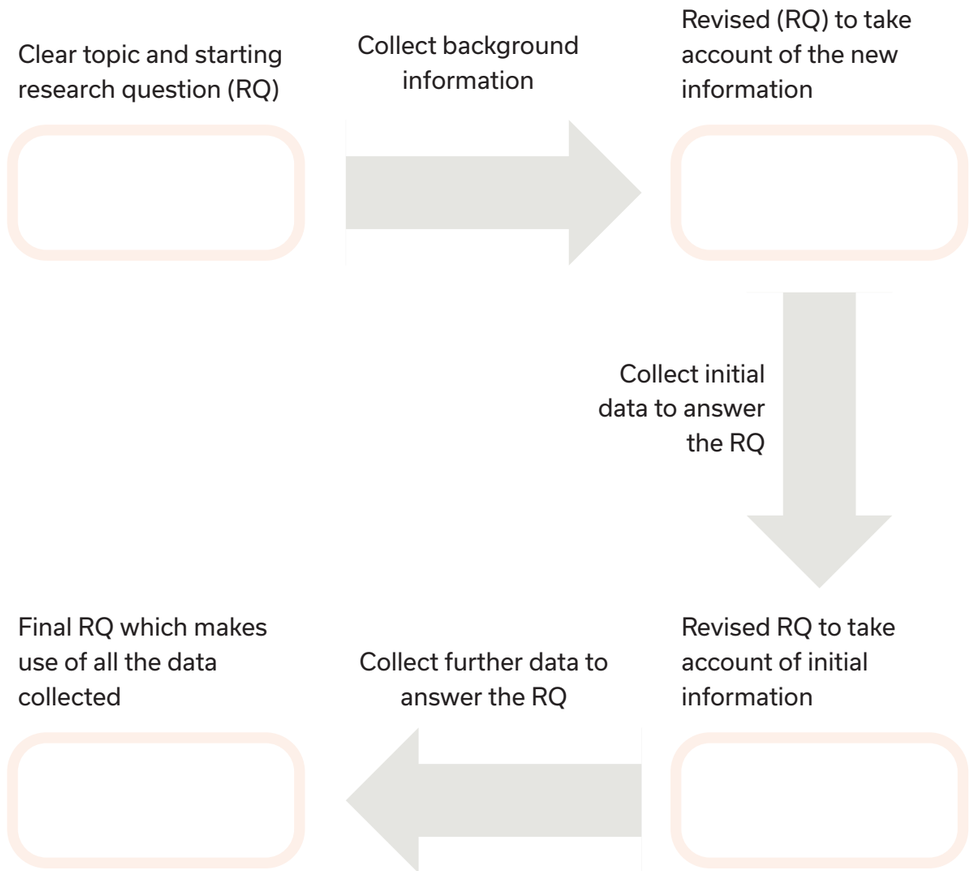
WHO you want to tell about the research	WHAT particular points you want to tell them (including the ones you think will most interest them)	HOW you want to tell them about the research (the ways you think will be the best ways for them to take notice)

GO TO the OUR VOICES resources tab if you need to download more pages for your plan.

Doing research
Developing research questions

It is important to always have a clear research question. It is helpful to have your research question written clearly somewhere to remind you what it is. This will keep you on track as you plan and carry out your research.

However, research questions often change during research studies. That is normal. As you develop your research you will learn different things about your topic. This will develop your understanding of the topic and show you ways of improving your research and the research question. The following diagram could help you keep track of your research question and help you to discuss your research with others.



Doing research
Research Diary

Date	What I did	What I learnt	What I might do in the future
Example entry *1st May*	*Prepared my research question and discussed it with my teacher.*	*The research question could be answered in lots of different ways. Some ways are not giving me information I am looking for.*	*Re-write the question thinking about the ideas we discussed.* *Try out the question on some friends to see if it works better to give me information I want.*

Doing research
Appendices