



It's that time of the term when you have to do a school project. You look at the topic and have no idea of how you'll ever complete your project, let alone how to begin. What you need to help you is a plan of attack, so here goes!

1 Tackle it right now. The more time you can spend on your project, the better your project

will be and the less you'll worry. The longer you leave the job, the bigger the task will seem. It is very easy to become overwhelmed by what you have to do, especially if you have left your project to the last minute.

2 Choose a topic you are keen on. It's no use researching something that bores you.

Oh No! Not Another Project

3 Make a list of key words related to your topic. This will help you to create a focus, or organise your ideas. For example, if your topic is *villains*, key words could be *rogues, ruffians, rascals, ratbags, criminals, con men, convicts, murderers, forgers or kidnappers*. These key words will help you to find material in databases such as Internet search engines or library catalogues.

4 Head to the library. Check out any relevant books then and there, especially if your topic is likely to be popular. You should also go to a computer to see if there is online information. However, you need to make sure that it is from a reliable website.

5 Brainstorm or make a mind map. Write down every question, word or idea you can think of which has to do with your topic. You might ask what kinds of people are villains? Who are some infamous people in history? How do people turn into villains?

6 Organise your ideas into smaller sections. You can do this by having sub-headings. Or you might like to organise your material from its most important to its least important aspects.

7 Plan deadlines for your project. Break the work into sections and decide when you'll finish each section.

8 If you need to conduct interviews or undertake fieldwork, now is the time to send out letters, emails or faxes. You might also make appointments to interview people. Spend time thinking of questions to ask. If you are going to do interviews, decide if you are

going to use a tape recorder, take handwritten notes, or use a computer. If you are going to do a survey, decide what methods you will use to record results.

9 Write notes from your resources, but put down *only* the information you need for your project. Photocopy *only* the information you require. If you photocopy material, highlight only those sections you want to use. It's important that you write these points out as notes, or rephrase them in your own words. Taking others' exact words and recording them as your own is known as plagiarism, a form of stealing.

10 Keep a record of the resources you use, such as a book's title, author/s, publisher, date & place of publication, for example: Bates, Dianne, *The New Writer's Survival Guide: An Introduction to the Craft of Writing*, (Penguin Books, Ringwood Vic, 1989). Always acknowledge quotes and sources of information at the end of your project.

11 Sort out the information you've collected. Select the material you need and arrange it, using the sub-headings from Step 6. This will help to make it easier to write your first draft.

12 Write your project. At this stage, you can decide if you want a glossary and/or an index. If your project includes an introduction and conclusion, write these after you have worked on the main text.

13 Decide if you are going to include graphics (such as graphs, charts, maps or photographs). Decide also how you are going to present your information. Are you

preparing a PowerPoint presentation? Or pasting photographs, maps and information on a board? Or simply writing an essay with fancy headings and sub-headings?

14 Read over your project again and again. Keep fixing your sentences. By doing this, you are improving your sentences through editing. Remember though, the most important part of any project is the information you present. It must be correct and presented clearly.

15 When you are happy with how your project is written, you should proofread it. This means reading through your project carefully and correcting poor punctuation, spelling and grammatical errors. Don't forget to number the pages and to include photo captions and

to label graphs. Lastly, check your name and other relevant details are included.

16 You can now hand your project to your teacher and go off with your mates for some well-earned rest.



Questions

- 1 What happens if you leave your project until the last minute?
 - a You will find it easier to write.
 - b You will be more interested in it.
 - c You will be overwhelmed with how much you have to do.
- 2 Key words help you to
 - a find material in databases.
 - b choose an interesting topic.
 - c finish your project on time.
- 3 What is plagiarism?
 - a stealing books from the library
 - b writing up a mind map
 - c using someone else's words as your own
- 4 You would write an introduction
 - a before borrowing books from the library.
 - b after writing the main text of your project.
 - c after checking that your name is on the project.
- 5 How is editing different to proofreading?
 - a You only check for spelling mistakes when you edit.
 - b You only rewrite sentences when you edit.
 - c You only write photo captions when you edit.
- 6 How would you prove that you researched your project?
 - a by writing your name on it
 - b by borrowing books from your school library
 - c by writing a list of your resources at the end of your project

Vocabulary

Find words in the text that match the meanings below. The word is in the section shown in brackets.

- 7 Unable to cope with a given task (1)
- 8 Famous for the wrong reasons (5)
- 9 Features or characteristics (6)
- 10 To express in different words (9)
- 11 The first written copy of something (11)

Grammar

The words in **BLUE** appear in the text. Match them by writing the correct synonym shown in **RED**.

E.g. *under / below*

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| 12 complete | arrange |
| 13 worry | finish |
| 14 topic | concern |
| 15 organise | theme |

Back To The Text...

- 16 The project is due on
 - a May 14.
 - b March 14.
- 17 Who do you think this text is most likely written for?
 - a students
 - b teachers
- 18 Who wrote (*The New Writer's Survival Guide: An Introduction to the Craft of Writing*)?
 - a Vic Ringwood
 - b Dianne Bates

Sequencing

Look back through the card to find what happened first. Choose **a** or **b**.

- 19 a Visit the library.
b Choose a topic.
- 20 a Set deadlines for the project.
b Keep a record of your resources.
- 21 a Make appointments for interviews.
b Consider how you will present your information.

Think About This

- 22 Section 3 covers the use of key words. Which of the following would be the best key word for the topic of submarines?
 - a boats
 - b sailors
 - c submersibles
- 23 The word *aspects* in section 6 could be substituted with
 - a words.
 - b marks.
 - c facets.

Challenge Option

Writing: List five topics you would enjoy doing a project on.

