

Taking Notes During Research

You have to do research for your paper. You know your topic, and before researching you should know your subtopics as well. For example, if the topic for my paper is “Aspects of my cultural heritage” my subtopics might be food, holidays, and language.

When you’re ready to research, do some preparation first by writing down the questions you hope to answer. It’s OK to write more than you end up putting in the paper. Maybe you write a question you can’t find a good answer to. Or maybe you write a question you thought would have a simple answer, but it turns out the answer is much too complex to fit in your paper. If you have

extra questions to start with, you can then just put the best answers in your paper. Here are some sample questions I might research about food in my culture:



- What foods are grown the most?
- Which foods and dishes are central to everyday diet?
- Which dishes are prepared for important ceremonies like holidays and weddings?
- When people from my culture moved to other countries, which foods did they continue preparing? Which did they not?
- Are there any dishes that might seem especially strange or interesting to the reader?

If I can answer all these questions in my research, I’ll get more than I can fit in one paragraph. I can choose the best of these and leave the other information for another time.

Your turn! Write your paper’s major topic, the subtopics, and questions you want to answer for each subtopic. I’ve given you space for five subtopics, but just include however many your teacher assigned.

Major topic: _____

Subtopic 1: _____

Questions: _____

Subtopic 2: _____

Questions: _____

Subtopic 3: _____

Questions: _____

Subtopic 4: _____

Questions: _____

Subtopic 5: _____

Questions: _____
