

Preparing for Research

You've been assigned to write a research paper. Before you do the actual research, it's good to prepare. Of course you need to have your topic first (either given to you by the teacher or your choice). Next you should brainstorm a lot of ideas about your topic

After that, write a list of questions you have about your topic. These questions will often arise naturally from the brainstorming you did. If I were writing a report on volcanic islands, I might write questions such as: How do they form? How long does it take one to form? How long does it take before a volcanic island is habitable? Which islands are volcanic islands? Why did they form where they did? Do these islands have active volcanoes?

You may be instructed to include a graph, chart, or other visual aid. If so, take time to also think of aspects of your topic that could best be represented that way. For example, I might include a map of the world with the major volcanic islands marked.

Write a list of questions about your topic that you hope to answer in your research. It's OK to have a lot of questions; you may not be able to answer all of them well, and this will allow you to choose the best for your paper. Mark any questions that could be answered using a visual aid.

Questions about my topic:


