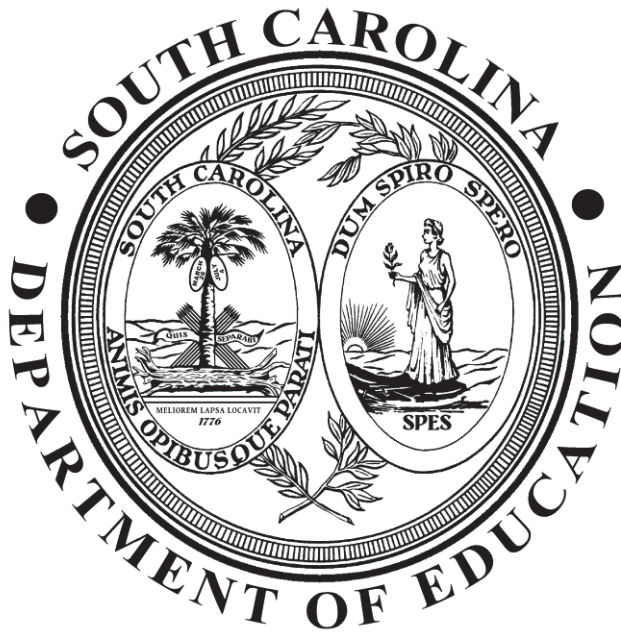


STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION



*Research Support Document for the 2024 South
Carolina College- and Career-Ready English
Language Arts Standards*

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Research Support Document

The following resources support the Research strand, standard, and indicators. This support document is meant to provide an entry point for the research process as a whole, understanding that grades K-5 enter the research process at the introductory level, grades 6-8 continue developing the research process, and grades 9-12 work toward mastery of the research process. In addition, it serves to clarify the difference between inquiry and research. Inquiry is the seeking of information through questioning and is an initial step in the processes related to research.

When reading this document, examples and expectations should be viewed through the lens of grade-level indicator appropriateness. For example, students are not expected to identify potential bias until fifth grade. Always refer to the standards document to align examples and expectations with your grade-level indicators.

Types of Questioning

Effective questioning is a crucial aspect of the research process, guiding students through the complexities of inquiry and investigation. The ability to ask thoughtful, targeted questions is fundamental for students to engage deeply with their research topics, develop critical thinking skills, and foster a mindset of continuous learning and curiosity.

This section of the support document introduces educators to various questioning techniques essential for research. By exploring different types of questions, teachers can equip their students with the tools needed to effectively navigate the research process. From predicting future outcomes and justifying events to exploring solutions and understanding construction processes, these questioning strategies are designed to enhance students' analytical capabilities and drive comprehensive, insightful research.

By mastering these questioning techniques, students will not only become adept at dissecting and understanding complex topics but also develop a structured research approach that emphasizes inquiry, adaptability, and independent learning. This foundational skill set is crucial for academic success and prepares students for the challenges of real-world problem-solving and decision-making.

Note: This is a non-exhaustive list of the types of questioning that are possible during the research process. In addition, it is not expected for educators to explicitly teach each type presented in this chart. Examples and expectations should be viewed through the lens of grade-level indicator appropriateness.

Type	Definition	Example	Classroom Application
Factual Questions	Questions that seek specific information or facts.	Who is the author of <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> ?	Encourage students to gather foundational knowledge.

Type	Definition	Example	Classroom Application
Conceptual Questions	Questions that explore broader concepts and ideas.	What is the significance of social media in shaping modern communication?	Promote understanding of relationships and underlying principles.
Debatable Questions	Questions that have multiple viewpoints and can be argued from different perspectives.	Is the use of AI in education beneficial or harmful?	Foster critical thinking and discussion, guiding students in developing their arguments and supporting them with evidence.
Analytical Questions	Questions that require breaking down information into components to understand structure and meaning.	What rhetorical choices does the author use to persuade the audience?	Teach students to analyze and interpret data and texts.
Synthesis Questions	Questions that combine information from various sources to create new understanding.	How can themes from different novels be compared to reflect societal issues?	Encourage students to integrate information from different texts and resources to form new insights.
Predicting Questions	Questions that ask for a forecast or projection based on current data or trends.	How might the protagonist's actions affect the outcome of the story?	Encourage students to use evidence and reasoning to make informed predictions about future events or trends.
Justifying the Cause of Events Questions	Questions that require students to explain why events occurred, identifying underlying causes.	What caused the Great Depression?	Develop students' ability to link causes and effects, using evidence to support their explanations.
Solution Questions	Questions that prompt students to propose solutions to problems.	How can writers avoid plagiarism in their work?	Encourage creative problem-solving and application of knowledge.

Type	Definition	Example	Classroom Application
Explaining Means to Goal Questions	Questions that ask students to explain the steps or methods needed to achieve a specific goal.	What are the necessary steps to write an effective argumentative essay?	Help students plan and outline processes or strategies to achieve objectives.

Evaluating Sources

When conducting research, evaluating the quality of sources is crucial for ensuring the reliability and validity of findings. The following section provides detailed instructions on how to assess sources in key categories: authority/credibility, accuracy/verifiability, bias/objectivity, currency/timeliness, scope/depth, and intended audience/purpose.

Authority and Credibility

- **Focus:** The credentials and qualifications of the author or organization providing the information.
- **Possible Evaluation Criteria**
 - **Author's Qualifications:** Look for the author's academic background, professional experience, and other relevant credentials. Is the author an expert in the field?
 - **Publisher's Reputation:** Check if the source is published by a reputable organization, academic journal, or well-known publisher.
 - **Citations and References:** Does the source cite other credible works? Are there references to peer-reviewed articles or authoritative texts?

Accuracy and Verifiability

- **Focus:** The correctness of the information and the ability to verify the claims made.
- **Possible Evaluation Criteria**
 - **Factual Information:** Cross-check facts with other reliable sources. Is the data consistent with what is found in other credible publications?
 - **Citations and Sources:** Are the sources of information clearly cited, allowing for verification?
 - **Evidence and Methodology:** Is there a clear explanation of how the information was gathered and analyzed?

Bias and Objectivity

- **Focus:** The presence of any prejudice or partiality that might affect the neutrality of the information.
- **Possible Evaluation Criteria**
 - **Author's Perspective:** Consider the author's potential biases, affiliations, or interests that might influence the content.
 - **Balanced Viewpoint:** Does the source present multiple sides of an issue, or is it one-sided?
 - **Language and Tone:** Look for emotionally charged language or persuasive techniques that might indicate bias.

Currency and Timeliness

- **Focus:** The relevance of the information to the current context and whether it is up to date.
- **Possible Evaluation Criteria**
 - **Publication Date:** When was the information published or last updated?

- **Relevance to Topic:** Ensure the information is still pertinent to the current state of the field or topic.
- **Updates and Revisions:** Check if the source has been revised to reflect new data or developments.

Scope and Depth

- **Focus:** The comprehensiveness and detail of the information provided.
- **Possible Evaluation Criteria**
 - **Coverage of Topic:** Does the source cover the topic in sufficient depth? Is it a broad overview or a detailed analysis?
 - **Level of Detail:** Are complex concepts explained thoroughly? Is there sufficient evidence and explanation?
 - **Specialization:** Is the source appropriately specialized for your research needs (e.g., technical vs. general audience)?

Intended Audience and Purpose

- **Focus:** The target audience for the source and the author's purpose for creating it.
- **Possible Evaluation Criteria**
 - **Target Audience:** Determine if the source is aimed at scholars, professionals, general readers, or a specific demographic.
 - **Purpose of the Source:** Identify whether the source aims to inform, persuade, entertain, or sell a product.
 - **Content Appropriateness:** Ensure the content matches the needs and comprehension level of the intended audience.

Term	Definition
Accuracy of sources	In research, the quality of being free from mistakes or errors.
Authority	The source of information; an authoritative source is considered reliable because it has proven to be authentic.
Author's Purpose	The author's intent for writing (e.g., to answer, explain, describe, instruct, persuade, inform, entertain, excite, startle, sadden, or others) for the audience.
Bias	When a writer or speaker exhibits a partiality for or against - or prejudice against - a person, a topic, or an idea; some biases are directly stated, while others are implied; implicit biases (not directly expressed) require the reader to think critically about the text and pay close attention to an author's choice of words, the connotation of language, and tone; sometimes, students must evaluate the source of the text to determine if bias is present; for example, if a large corporation writes a review about a product it produces and sells, the review is most likely biased in favor of the product.

Term	Definition
Credibility	The aspect of being trusted; having a credible text means that the information contained within is objective, reputable, and from a relevant source.
Current	Relevant to the present time.
Depth	Level of detail included within a source.
Evaluate	To form an opinion or judgment about the content, quality, validity, or effectiveness of ideas, information, structures, and/or language within a text.
Intended Audience	The person or people meant to read, hear, or view an author's message.
Objectivity	Having an absence of bias, judgment, or prejudice.
Scope	How much of a subject is discussed or covered by a source.
Timeliness	Appropriate for the occasion or time.
Verifiability	The ability to be confirmed as accurate and truthful.

Guiding questions for evaluating sources:

- Does the source help develop the topic?
- How does the source add to the development and credibility of the topic?
- Is the author an expert on the topic?
- Is the source free from bias?
- Does the source address multiple perspectives?
- Does the source provide the most recent available information?
- Who is the intended audience?
 - Who benefits from the source?
 - Who does not benefit from the source?
- Is the information in the text supported by evidence? Is the evidence cited by the author?
- What is the purpose of the text (inform, teach, entertain, sell, etc.)?
- Is the information in the text accurate? Can it be crosschecked or verified by other sources?
- Is the source free of spelling and grammatical errors? Does it look skillfully written and professional?
- Does the text include photos and/or other visual aids that are relevant and free from bias?

The chart below offers **possible** grade-level expectations for evaluating sources. This is not an exhaustive list. Always refer to the standards document to align examples and expectations with your grade level indicators.

Grade Level	Expectations
Grades K-2	<p>At the early childhood level, students may begin to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> differentiate between the types of sources such as books, websites, and people. explain the concept of an author or creator. discuss the connection between pictures and information.
Grades 3-5	<p>At the elementary level, students may begin to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify the author of the source to evaluate his/her credibility and reliability. identify the publishing information of the source to evaluate the currency and timeliness. identify potential bias based on the intended audience and purpose of the text.
Grades 6-8	<p>At the middle level, students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> continue progressive development of previous skills. cross-check sources to verify information. compare and contrast multiple perspectives to evaluate bias notice errors in spelling and grammar. evaluate photos and/or visual aids for relevancy and bias.
English 1-4	<p>At the high school level, students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> continue progressive development of previous skills. justify the use of a specific source. analyze bias based on the intended audience and purpose of the text.

Citing Sources

Citations attribute credit to the original authors of the information and ideas that are implicitly and/or explicitly referenced in an individual's writing through quotations, paraphrasing, or summarizing. The purpose of citations is to not only give credit to the original source/author but to also allow the reader insight into the author's original thought processes as a writer and/or researcher.

It is essential to cite sources used in research for several reasons:

- to add credibility to the academic writing by ensuring readers that proper and relevant research has been conducted
- to be a responsible and ethical practitioner of academic research and writing
- to avoid plagiarism
- to allow readers access to the resources that have been used

Information that **must** be cited includes:

- facts, figures, and ideas that are not common knowledge
- ideas, words, and theories that have been used in other published materials
- replication of exact language from another author or speaker

Words and ideas, both written and spoken, are considered intellectual property and cannot be used without permission and/or proper citation. When this happens, whether deliberately or inadvertently, it is called plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious offense, and the best way to avoid it is to appropriately cite one's sources.

In general, citations are listed alphabetically in a bibliography, works cited page, or reference list at the end of a paper and may also include in-text citations such as footnotes and parentheticals throughout the paper. Citations in a bibliography, works cited page, or reference list typically include standard elements of identification including author name(s), titles of works, and dates of publication. These pages include a list of all the sources that have been used in the process of conducting research. In-text citations alert readers to cited material in the body of a paper and inform readers where the original information can be found. These citations work in conjunction with a bibliography, works cited, or reference page.

Citations may look different depending on the citation style being used. A citation style is a set of guidelines that dictate exactly how sources should be cited in academic writing. While APA and MLA citation styles are two of the most used, any academic style guide or official handbook may be referenced when choosing and using a citation style. An author must choose an appropriate style to meet his/her needs, taking into consideration the style(s) that are commonly used in the field or discipline that represents the topic of the paper.

Term	Definition
Cite	To select and use a quote from a source (e.g., a text, speaker, etc.) as evidence to support or justify a claim; quotes are typically cited in a specific citation format depending on the required style (e.g. MLA, APA, or Chicago); citing strong and clear evidence can help to strengthen an argument and/or text.
Plagiarism	To use the ideas or words from a person or text without attributing credit to the original source.
Quote	Exact or paraphrased words from an author or speaker that include attribution or credit to the original source.
Source	Where authors, readers, and/or speakers locate information, concepts, or ideas.
Style Guide	A resource that outlines the general guidelines and rules for writing, formatting documents, and citing sources within a particular field of study. Examples of common style guides include MLA, APA, and Chicago.

Guiding questions for citing sources:

- What citation style should be used?
- When should a citation be included?
- How does using citations avoid plagiarism?
- Why is it important to use the correct style guide when citing sources?
- How should one determine the correct source to use?
- What is a Reference List? A Bibliography? A Works Cited Page? When would their use be necessary?
- What type of information should be included in a citation?
- What types of sources should be cited for scholarly papers?
- Where are scholarly sources located? How can they be found?
- Where can publication information be found within a source?

The chart below offers **possible** grade-level expectations for citing sources. This is not an exhaustive list. Always refer to the standards document to align examples and expectations with your grade level indicators.

Grade Level	Expectations
Grades K-2	At the early childhood level, students may begin to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify who created or wrote a text. • associate specific information with its source. For example, "I learned about flowers from my book." • use simple visual aids like drawings or pictures to represent where they found information.

Grade Level	Expectations
Grades 3-5	<p>At the elementary level, students may begin to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify the title, author, and publication year of a text. • explain what plagiarism is. • paraphrase while citing text evidence.
Grades 6-8	<p>At the middle level, students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continue progressive development of previous skills. • identify the title, author, publisher, and publication year of a text. • include identified information in a bibliography using a structure defined by the teacher. • cite direct quotes using a page number and speaker tags (e.g. According to the author,...). • practice academic integrity by avoiding plagiarism.
English 1-4	<p>At the high school level, students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continue progressive development of previous skills. • reference a style guide to appropriately cite sources. • include sources in a reference list or works cited page. • use parenthetical citations according to the identified citation style. • practice academic integrity by avoiding plagiarism..

Refining the Scope of Inquiry

Inquiry is the seeking of information through questioning and is an initial step in the processes related to research. For research to be effective, a researcher must refine his/her scope of inquiry through the selection of a topic, identification of a purpose, and acknowledgment of the intended audience.

Guiding questions for refining the scope of inquiry:

- Is the chosen topic broad enough to begin initial research?
- Are there too few sources to support the topic?
- Will the chosen topic allow for in-depth inquiry and analysis?
- After initial research, can the broader topic be narrowed and focused into a specific research question to be further explored?
- Is the chosen research topic relevant?
- Is the research and data on the selected research topic current (not over ten years old)?
- Is the specific research topic complex and arguable?
- Is the research topic original?
- Can the research topic be supported by both primary and secondary sources or data?
- Is the research question crafted for objective, non-biased research to be conducted?

Choosing a topic of interest is the first step in the research process. An appropriate topic is both narrow enough to be focused and measurable and broad enough to allow for the attainment of a variety of information and resources regarding the topic.

Questions to ask oneself when developing a topic include:

- Is there an issue in which you have a special interest?
- Have you learned or been introduced to something that you want to know more about?
- Is there a topic on which you have a strong opinion?
- Consider the available resources if you have multiple topic ideas.

Once a broad topic is chosen, it must be narrowed to formulate a focused and specific research question. If a topic is too broad or too narrow, it will result in a research question that is difficult to answer. It can help to limit the topic using such parameters as a specific geographical area, culture, time frame, discipline, or population group.

Examples are included below.

Broad Topic →	Narrowed Topic →	Focused Topic →	Research Question
Social media	Social media and adolescents	Social media and adolescent communication	What is the impact of social media usage on the ability of adolescents to effectively communicate?

Broad Topic →	Narrowed Topic →	Focused Topic →	Research Question
Voting	Voter turnout	Voter turnout and the under-30 population	What are the most effective strategies for increasing voter turnout in the under-30 population?

The next step in the process is to identify the purpose of the research. The purpose, or reason(s) why the research is being conducted, helps determine the remainder of the research plan including the audience and research methods.

Research can be conducted for a variety of reasons including:

- to explain why something happened/happens
- to predict what may happen in the future
- to test a hypothesis
- to discover ways to fix or improve a problem
- to add new information to a field of knowledge

Problem and purpose statements can be added to a research paper to explain the objectives of the inquiry. Characteristics of each statement are included below.

Problem Statements	Purpose Statements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clear and concise • introduce the question, problem, or issue being researched • explain why the research is being conducted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clear and concise • can include a “hook” to interest the reader • define the method of study • define the variables, population, and/or setting of the research

A researcher must also identify his/her audience for the research paper. The audience will impact the researcher’s style, tone, diction, etc. when writing the research paper and/or delivering the results.

Researchers can use the following questions when identifying the audience that would be interested in and benefit from his/her work:

- Who would be interested in the results of this research?
- Who would benefit from the results of this research?
- How will I respond to those who do not agree with the results of my research?

Term	Definition
Broaden	To further explore a topic to expand thinking.

Term	Definition
Inquiry	The seeking of information through questioning; inquiry is an initial step in the processes related to research.
Narrow	To ask exploratory questions to focus and refine research.
Refine	To improve by removing unnecessary details or features.
Research	The process of investigating and studying sources and materials to establish and gather facts, reach new conclusions, and satisfy curiosity.
Research Question	A specific question was generated to investigate materials and sources as part of the research process.
Topic	The subject matter on which a person focuses his or her research.

The chart below offers **possible** grade-level expectations for refining the scope of inquiry. This is not an exhaustive list. Always refer to the standards document to align examples and expectations with your grade level indicators.

Grade Level	Expectations
Grades K-2	At the early childhood level, students may begin to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify and discuss their interests. • ask simple questions about their interests. • use visual aids like pictures or drawings to represent their interests.
Grades 3-5	At the elementary level, students may begin to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ask and answer questions to narrow or broaden thinking about a topic for inquiry. • generate a question about a topic for inquiry.
Grades 6-8	At the middle level, students should be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continue the progressive development of previous skills. • use a variety of print and multimedia sources to conduct research to refine the scope of inquiry as relevant to the topic. • generate and refine a question about a topic for inquiry. • identify the purpose for conducting research as related to a chosen topic.
English 1-4	At the high school level, students should be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continue the progressive development of previous skills. • answer a question by following a structured research process. • refine the scope of inquiry as relevant to the topic(s), purpose, and audience.