

Projects at work

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I. A RATIONALE FOR PROJECT WORK

Introduction

A project is defined in the dictionary as “a task requiring considerable and concerted effort.” Projects are real life activities that take place in all walks of life - in town planning, in government, in laboratories and in classrooms. Projects require detailed planning, procedures for working and, very often, collaboration. The final results are usually presented to the body that requested the project and are often for public domain. Projects done in class are also authentic activities that involve both teacher and pupils in the planning, executing, evaluation and presentation stages. They are suitable vehicles for motivation, language interaction, decision making and cooperative work. In short, projects are ideal for the new approach to language learning and language acquisition.

What is a project?

A project is a carefully planned and designed body of work, which takes pupils out of the classroom in order to investigate their chosen topic. It encourages pupils to use language in an authentic way. At a later stage, the project brings the outside world into the classroom. A project is something that is pupil-motivated and pupil-centered. The language required for the project is derived from the nature of the project itself. The teacher’s role is to facilitate the project by planning it together with the pupils. For the duration of the project, s/he is there to provide support, assistance, encouragement and gently push pupils in the right direction.

What isn't a project? It is not a class activity or a few tasks assigned from the course book. A project can develop out of themes or topics from a course book but it must have the element of choice, and it must encourage investigation or research, recording observations, questionnaires or something else that is out of the classroom domain.

Why projects?

There are many reasons why projects are suitable vehicles for learning and should be encouraged within the classroom setting. Here are some of the reasons:

- Projects represent authentic activities that pupils may encounter later in life.
- Pupil-chosen topics are always more motivating than teacher-chosen topics.
- Projects encourage genuine pupil-pupil and pupil-teacher collaboration.
- Well-designed projects demand higher learning skills like problem solving or devising a research question.
- Projects can be presented to an audience and allow pupils to demonstrate what they have learned. The pupils are now the “experts” on the subject, creating genuine dialogue within the classroom setting (something that does not often take place with teacher-generated questions).
- Projects are suitable for heterogeneous classes where weak and strong pupils work together in order to achieve success.
- Projects can be designed for all levels of language learners.
- Projects are open-ended and require collaboration between teacher and pupils to build the rubrics that will be used to evaluate the work. Rubrics should include both peer and self evaluation.
- Projects should contain a written part as well as an oral presentation. This should not be a frontal lecture but rather a creative means of presenting what the pupils have learned. It may be as simple as a poster or something more sophisticated like a video or PowerPoint presentation.
- Projects should be done in class, during which time there should be no frontal lessons. This allows for a change in classroom routine from frontal, teacher-centered lessons to pupil-centered lessons.
- Projects help raise the standards of language

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learning and encourage areas of language learning that are not always dealt with in the traditional classroom situation.

- By using language in a natural way – not in repetitive drills or exercises – pupils learn to use and recognize language structures. In addition, by writing a draft and then rewriting it after correction by teacher or peers using a checklist, pupils learn from their mistakes and improve their writing skills.

Reading skills are improved when pupils read Internet, book or magazine articles on their chosen subject.

- Projects incorporate all four domains of language learning and help pupils attain the standards of each of the four domains of the curriculum:

Social Interaction Pupils develop communication skills, both orally and in writing, enriching their vocabulary and improving their use of accurate language.

Access to Information While researching their chosen topic, pupils are exposed to oral and written texts from a variety of sources: Internet, books, magazines, experts in the field, etc.

Presentation Pupils are given opportunities for presenting information and ideas on a wide range of topics in an organized manner, in a variety of formats in spoken and written English. The creative, multimedia oral presentation complements the written presentation.

Appreciation of Literature, Culture and Language Research and in-depth learning about the topic allow pupils to gain cultural, historical and social insight.

Designing a project

A project may take a few lessons or a few weeks to complete. The length of the project is not important. What is important is the planning, execution and evaluation. A well planned project will ensure trouble-free procedures in the classroom and will allow the teacher to move freely from group to group, giving help and advice.

There are a number of stages in the planning of a project:

- The teacher must have a clear idea of the educational and language goals of the project. It is important to define the goals and expected outcomes for both teacher and pupils.

- Pupils must be told very clearly about the project procedures; for example, time allowed for project, who to work with, where to get help, resources, etc. The procedures should be detailed in writing.
- Tools for evaluation must be prepared before the project starts. Ideally, teacher and pupils together should design the rubrics that will be used to evaluate the project at all its stages.

1. Defining the aims of the project

As in all planned classroom activities, the teacher must be clear about the aims, goals and objectives of the task as well as what will be considered evidence that these outcomes have been reached. The aims should be expressed in terms of benchmarks and domains of language achievement. These aims will later be reflected in the tools of assessment. Other educational aims, which may not be evaluated but are still part of the overall aims of the project, should also be expressed. Here are some of the aims or goals that the teacher should set when planning a project. Obviously they will differ from class to class and project to project, but some of them will be the same.

Pupils will be able to:

- learn English by exposure to authentic language, both written and oral.
- write a paper in English using correct grammar, vocabulary, punctuation and spelling.
- use resource materials by learning how to summarize main ideas, collated from a number of sources.
- translate material from Hebrew to English if necessary.
- present their work orally, using visual and/or aural aids.
- design a research question and write a research paper using the standard conventions.
- become experts on the topic of their choice.
- work cooperatively within a group.
- work independently of the teacher.
- take responsibility for their part in the group.
- learn to negotiate their ideas and opinions and reach a consensus with others in the group.
- learn skills like surfing the Internet, using a data base, computer presentation software, and dictionaries.

2. Describing the procedures

The period during which the project takes place is called the “project period.” This should take place during class time and must be closely monitored. First, pupils should get a written handout explaining exactly what they are expected to do and how this will be monitored in class. The teacher may decide to do the project intensively over a few weeks or, alternately, may devote one weekly class lesson to it. Pupils must fill out a daily/weekly work schedule to monitor their progress.

Part of the final grade for the project will be given for a “working file,” which should contain:

- drafts
- resource materials
- the completed weekly work schedule
- notes of group discussions and decision making (if applicable)
- drafts of interviews with sources
- sketches and plans for the second dimension

3. Evaluation of the project

Projects are to be evaluated using pre-designed tools of assessment. Wherever possible, pupils should be partners in building the rubrics for assessment; if not, they must be shown the assessment tools before they start the project. This helps them to focus on the elements of the project that will be assessed. Rubrics can also be used as checklists for pupils to see that they have included everything. Pupils must also be told at the outset the weight of each part of the project in the overall grade.

These are some assessment tools for evaluating pupils’ progress and final product:

- checklists
- rubric for the working file
- rubric for the final product
- rubric for the oral presentation
- self evaluation
- peer evaluation
- final verbal evaluation by the teacher

Conclusion

Projects encompass many aspects of language learning, meet educational aims and provide enrichment for both pupils and teachers.

II. CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Managing the class during the “project period” requires thought and organization. Pupils may feel that they are free to chat and fool around, since the traditional frontal lessons do not take place. There may be more noise in the classroom while pupils sit in groups discussing their work. Therefore, it is important to lay down ground rules and make clear that this is an important working situation, so pupils will cooperate and use their time fruitfully. Here are some points to consider:

Noise level

There is a difference between “busy noise” when pupils are engaged in their work – discussing, arguing and debating – and noise coming from a class that is not working. “Busy noise” is permissible and even desirable. However, when the noise is caused by pupils chatting, shouting across the classroom to one another and generally wasting their time, then it must be stopped at once. Even “busy noise” should be low as there may be pupils who need quiet. One idea is to use traffic light signals. Make three colored signs, each on a stand. If there is too much noise coming from a group, put the red sign on their desk so they know to stop talking immediately. The yellow sign means they can carry on talking but must lower their voices. The green sign (which can be put on a desk from time to time to give positive feedback) means that the group can carry on and is working well at the correct noise level. This may sound childish but it is important to train the class to work within the norm of consideration for others.

Seating arrangements

When working in a group, members should sit facing one another, to comfortably maintain eye contact. If possible, have pupils arrange the desks into groups or make sure that for the period of the project, pupils sit next to others in their group so members can communicate easily.

Pupil responsibility

The main reason for working in groups is to divide the workload between group members. Some work must be done in a group – brainstorming, deciding on the research question, dividing up the work load, making decisions about how to progress, etc. But the actual reading, summarizing, writing and corrections should

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be done individually, with the sub-topics or chapters of the work written by individual pupils. This avoids duplication, and ensures that work is divided evenly. The conclusion and final edited work must be read by the entire group with everyone giving input. Pupils are also responsible for keeping their drafts, work schedules, discussion notes, etc. in their working file, which should be handed to the teacher at the end of each lesson.

Job delegation

Each member of the group should be given responsibility for one area of the project. Here are some examples:

- writing up the daily schedule and handing it in to the teacher
- organizing the work file and handing it in to the teacher
- taking notes about the group's decision-making
- making appointments with the teacher or other people with whom group members wish to meet regarding their topic (the librarian, another subject teacher, the computer technician, etc.)

Additional jobs may be delegated so that everyone has responsibility for the success of the project.

Free movement during class time

This depends on school policy and the teacher's personal choice. S/he may allow pupils to leave the classroom to go to the library, to a computer terminal or to meet with another teacher during class time. Inform the coordinator and the principal about such movement. Pupils must be in class at the beginning of the lesson to check attendance and also at the end for summarizing the day's work, form filling, and collecting work schedule and working file.

If free movement is impossible or undesirable, there are other options:

- Organize sessions in the computer room so that pupils can search for material on the Internet. Have them bring an empty diskette so they can save material and print it out later.
- Pupils can search at home or in the library for material.
- The teacher can find material for the pupils, if necessary.

Homework

During the project period there will be homework assigned, including:

- searching for resources
- accessing information by reading and summarizing
- rewriting draft copies that have been checked by the teacher
- typing out the final draft

Although most of the work will be done in class, pupils must know that sometimes they are expected to work at home as well. It may be helpful to send a note to parents explaining the project period and stating what is expected of the pupils.

Frontal lessons

There is no formal frontal teaching during the project period but occasionally there will be some frontal presentation (for example, at the beginning and end of each lesson). Problems and issues that apply to all or most of the groups should be dealt with frontally, such as project design and ongoing review of rubrics.

Using material from the projects

Materials gathered by pupils for their projects can be a good source of reading material for the whole class. During or after the project period, individual groups can prepare a short reading passage with questions, which can be used as a reading comprehension exercise in class. This has several advantages:

- Pupils present their information during the project process.
- Other members of the class become familiar with each group's topic of investigation.
- Authentic and relevant material is used.
- Pupils become practiced in preparing and answering questions.
- This activity can provide a break in the ongoing project process.

III. PLANNING A PROJECT FOR YOUR CLASS: A TEMPLATE

This template can be used to plan a project. It is possible to return to any section as the project develops, and change or add to it.

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Step 1: Project goals

Below is a list of project goals that relate to domains and benchmarks of the curriculum. It may be helpful to have the 2001 English curriculum booklet open when deciding on the benchmarks to be achieved, or select from the list below.

Domain of Social Interaction

- Pupils will be able to ask and answer questions, to gather information and express opinions about their topic.
- Pupils will be able to converse fluently on their topic.
- Pupils will be able to engage in conversation using appropriate language and rich vocabulary from their topic.

Domain of Access to Information

- Pupils will be able to understand the main ideas and significant details of a text.
- Pupils will be able to follow the argument in a range of expository texts.
- Pupils will be able to identify the points of view in a text, distinguish fact from opinion and draw inferences.
- Pupils will be able to compare and contrast attitudes and arguments from a variety of sources.
- Pupils will be able to understand the structure and conventions of various texts such as articles, webpages, news broadcasts, etc.
- Pupils will be able to use a range of appropriate reference sources such as dictionaries, online dictionaries, search engines, spell checkers, thesauri, online encyclopedias and online data bases.

Domain of Presentation

- Pupils will be able to spell frequently used words and use simple punctuation.
- Pupils will be able to use advanced punctuation and show mastery in spelling.
- Pupils will be able to compare and contrast information from various sources using different means of multimedia presentation.
- Pupils will be able to defend their project in the presentation by using main ideas and supporting ideas, using the multimedia dimension.

- Pupils will be able to present their project in a clearly designed written form in which they state their research question, support their findings and reach conclusions.
- Pupils will be able to use basic language structures and suitable vocabulary.
- Pupils will be able to organize their thoughts and present the findings of their research using discourse markers, accurate use of elaborate language, and grammatical structures.

Domain of Appreciation of Literature and Culture

- Pupils will be able to discuss themes and conflicts in literature and to express personal ideas and opinions.
- Pupils will be able to interpret and analyze literary texts.
- Pupils will be able to integrate their personal ideas with historical, literary and other themes.
- Pupils will be able to compare literature and other cultural products with real life experience.
- Pupils will be able to understand the universal nature of literary texts.
- Pupils will be able to review movies based on good literature and compare presentations of these different genres.

General Educational Values

- Pupils will learn to work together cooperatively and be responsible members of a learning group.
- Pupils will learn to become independent learners.
- Pupils will learn to take responsibility for their learning.
- Pupils will present their work in an organized and aesthetic way.
- Pupils will show creativity in the oral presentation.
- Pupils will use problem solving techniques and demonstrate higher learning skills.

Step 2: Prerequisite skills and knowledge

It is important to determine the enabling skills and prior knowledge that pupils need to be taught (or should know already) in order to complete a project successfully. Prerequisite skills include language (grammar), computer and organizational skills; for example:

- how to use a search engine

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- how to use an online dictionary and encyclopedia
- how to summarize information in pupils' own words
- how to ask a research question
- how to distinguish between useful and non-useful resources
- how to be a critical appraiser of websites
- how to divide the work load efficiently among group members
- how to use a graphic organizer (Appendix B)

The language proficiency, level and age of the class, and pupils' computer skills will determine what enabling skills must be taught.

Step 3: Choosing a topic

Pupils select the topic or topics for the project. There are several options:

- a. an overall, umbrella topic in which each group chooses its specific topic
- b. pupil-generated topics, approved by teacher
- c. projects based on course book topics studied in class
- d. literature-based projects
- e. interdisciplinary projects, coordinated with other subject teachers (for example, a project on the Holocaust/Anne Frank, coordinated with the history teacher)

Step 4: Procedures

Procedures must be clear to both teacher and pupils and detailed in writing. Here are some examples of possible procedures:

- The pupils will work in groups/pairs/individually.
- The project will take place over _____ period of time.
- During this time, only project work will be done in class.
- The project will be worked on once/twice a week in class.
- Pupils will keep a working file in which they will collect all rough drafts, resource materials, working schedules, etc.
- After the written part of the project is handed in, pupils will be given another _____ weeks to prepare for the oral presentation.
- Pupils will be free to go to the library, or any other resource center in the school during the lesson.

- There will be an opening and closing session for each lesson which all pupils must attend.
- Pupils must have their work schedule signed by the teacher at the end of each lesson. Each group will meet with the teacher periodically to discuss the progress of the project and deal with problems.

Step 5: Assessment

A large variety of assessment tools ensures a more valid assessment, which should be as reliable as possible. This is achieved by using a rubric that reflects the goals of the project, as well as self assessment, group assessment and peer assessment tools.

Both the ongoing process and the final product must be assessed. Rubrics must be designed for both parts of the project. Teachers familiar with rubrics may turn to the chapter on assessment and use one of the rubrics discussed there, or design a rubric using a rubric maker. Teachers who have never designed a rubric before may follow this simple explanation.

Building a rubric

A rubric is a tool for evaluation, which consists of three dimensions:

1. It shows the criteria according to which the evaluation will be made.
2. It describes the standards of proficiency for each criterion.
3. It reflects various levels of proficiency and the weight of each level in a grade.

Sample project goals:

- Pupils will be able to express their opinions on the topic.
- Pupils will be able to understand the main ideas and significant details of a text.
- Pupils will be able to use advanced punctuation and show mastery in spelling and grammar.
- Pupils will learn to work together cooperatively and be responsible members of a learning group.
- Pupils will present their work in an organized and aesthetic way.

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Sample project rubric:

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Silver</i>	<i>Bronze</i>
Content: understanding the main idea	The product shows an understanding of the main ideas. The group was able to extract the relevant information from the resources.	The product shows a generally good understanding of the topic and of main ideas found in the resources.	The product shows little understanding of the main ideas of the topic. Not all relevant information was included.
Expressing an opinion	Group members added to their understanding of the topic by expressing their own opinions on the topic.	Group members were able to express some of their own opinions on the topic, demonstrating a good understanding of the topic.	Group members were not able to express any opinions other than what they had read, indicating a lack of in-depth understanding of the topic.
Group work	The group worked well and was always on task. Each member contributed to the final product.	The group worked quite well together most of the time. There is evidence that each member contributed to the final product.	The group did not work well together and not everyone contributed to the final product.
Presentation and effort	Aesthetically presented, legible, includes pictures and charts	Reasonably presented with some pictures and charts	Presentation of work not aesthetic: no inclusion of pictures or charts
Language	No spelling mistakes, correct use of punctuation and grammar	A few spelling mistakes and some grammar and punctuation mistakes	Many spelling, grammar and punctuation mistakes

This rubric is an example of how some of the project goals must relate to the final assessment.

For further help in designing a rubric, consult the sites below.

1. To build a general rubric for the project:
http://www.teach-nology.com/web_tools/rubric/general/
2. To find a ready made rubric for evaluating collaboration:
<http://edweb.sdsu.edu/triton/tidepoolunit/Rubrics/collrubric.html>

Or use this rubric maker to design your own rubric for

collaboration:
<http://rubistar.4teachers.org/rubric.php?id=21&rubric=15>

3. To find a ready made rubric for a holistic evaluation of a multimedia project:
<http://pblmm.k12.ca.us/PBLGuide/MMrubric.htm>
4. To find a rubric maker for the oral presentation:
<http://pblchecklist.4teachers.org/testing.php?idunique=3&max=6&checklist=11>
5. To find a rubric maker for the group planning of the research project:
<http://rubistar.4teachers.org/rubric.php?id=21&rubric=3>

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Assessing the final product, working portfolio and the oral presentation requires three separate rubrics to be used at different stages of the project. A rubric can and should be revised and reviewed as project planning is consolidated.

Following is an example of a checklist for the written project, which should be used by pupils for self assessment before handing in their work.

<i>Checklist for written work</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Not yet</i>
Project contains all the required parts.		
Project is typed and in a folder opening from left to right.		
Project has name, date, and any other necessary information on the cover page.		
Project has been edited by all the members of the group/by myself for spelling, grammar and punctuation.		
Project contains picture, maps, charts or other documents that add to the understanding of the topic.		
Project has a bibliography.		
Project is neatly presented, easy to read and represents our/my best efforts.		

To construct a checklist, go to this site:
<http://www.4teachers.org/projectbased/checklist.shtml>

Step 6: Reflection and feedback

The final stage of the project is pupil self reflection and feedback from teacher to pupils. In the self reflection page pupils must relate to some of the following:

- Did you enjoy working on the project?
- Did you enjoy working in a group/pairs?
- What advantages do you think group work offers?
- What are the disadvantages of group/pair work?
- What new words did you learn?
- What new skills did you learn?
- Which part of the project did you enjoy most: the research, the writing, the oral presentation?

- Which part of the project was the most difficult for you and why?
- Which part of the project was the easiest for you and why?
- Next time you do a project, what changes would you like to make?
- In what area do you think your English has improved: reading, writing, spelling, new vocabulary, grammar, speaking?
- In what ways do you think your learning strategies have improved?
 - I have become more independent.
 - I am more organized.
 - My group can rely on me to do my share.
 - I have more confidence in my abilities.
 - I know I can get help if I need it.
 - I have learned how to work in a group.
 - I am no longer afraid of difficult texts.
 - I know how to use a dictionary for help.
 - I understand the importance of writing a first draft.
 - I have learned to be critical about my work.

In addition to the feedback provided by rubrics, pupils will also need written comments from the teacher.

Comments should have three clear parts:

1. A positive comment – encouraging words – that reflects pupils' effort, collaboration, achievements, presentations and in-depth understanding of the topic.
2. Constructive comments in simple language that relate to areas requiring further work.
3. Suggestions for improvement, enrichment and advancement:
 - You should read more.
 - Spend a few minutes every day practicing your spelling.
 - Make a personal vocabulary list for yourself and learn the words.
 - Practice speaking aloud to a friend or tape yourself and listen to the tape.
 - Read an article from an English language newspaper every day.

Finally, discuss the whole project with your pupils. Refer to all the phases of the project: planning, process,

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written work and presentation. Relate to such factors as working in a group and classroom management, and encourage pupils to reflect on the process that they went through and how it affected/promoted their learning. Use a feedback questionnaire as a springboard for discussion. A possible model for a self reflection/feedback questionnaire poses questions to pupils, relating to three areas of thinking and learning:

- thinking about the activities (that made up the project)
- thinking about pupils' feelings (while working on the project)
- thinking about thinking (the metacognitive aspect of the project)

Feedback discussions allow pupils to express their feelings and suggest changes for the next project.

IV. THE ORAL PRESENTATION

The oral presentation is the fourth part of the project, following the planning, the process, and final written work, and preceding the evaluation, reflection and feedback stages. The goal of the oral presentation is to enable pupils to share their knowledge and investigations with the rest of the class. They are now the "experts" on their subject and this is an opportunity for them to concentrate not so much on "what" they say but on "how" they say it. This is one of the few times that authentic questions and answers will take place in the classroom, as presenters later answer questions from the class on the topic. In other words, this presents a truly genuine language situation and not just "class talk." The oral presentation also allows peer evaluation, using a simple and clear rubric discussed in advance with the class. Finally, this presentation, although not the presentation for the Oral Bagrut, is nevertheless a practice run for pupils.

Stages of the oral presentation

1. Type of presentation

There are two types of presentation:

- Pupils present their research question and their conclusions.
- Topics investigated are used as a springboard for a creative presentation.

In real life situations a presentation usually involves visual/aural aids to attract and hold the interest of the audience. Therefore, pupils must use an additional

dimension to the formal talk. This is an opportunity for pupils to demonstrate their creative talents even if they are weak in English.

2. Form of presentation

It is a good idea to brainstorm various presentation ideas, which may include:

- a PowerPoint presentation
- creating a website
- making a video
- role play
- posters
- wall newspapers
- overhead slides
- incorporating music and/or dance
- models
- sound (audio cassette)

The presentation can be viewed as an "exhibition" of pupils' investigation, findings, discoveries and conclusions. It is as important as the written part of the project.

3. Preparing for the presentation

The following activities can be done in class:

- brainstorming
- discussing what is important in a presentation
- helping pupils decide how they want to present
- helping pupils organize materials, tools, computers
- designing the rubric together or, if one already exists, going over it carefully with pupils before the presentations so they know how to use it accurately (The importance of objectivity must be stressed.)
- deciding with the class whether to invite parents to the presentations and, if so, choosing a date and organizing the event

4. Class management for the presentation

The management of the presentations will depend on the size of the class and whether the projects were done in groups or individually. If there are too many presentations for the entire class to sit through, then divide the class into two and let groups/individuals present to half a class. Another classroom, as well as another teacher to be with one of the classes, will be needed. Alternatively, spread out the presentations over several lessons so that the entire class can see everyone's work.

5. Evaluations of the presentations

Use a rubric to evaluate the presentations. Pupils can use a clear, simple rubric to evaluate their peers. Peer evaluation is important as it requires pupils to be more aware of what is required of them and also how to be critical of their own and others' work. Critical appraisal of one's work is part of the learning process and requires pupils to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses as language learners. Moreover, by being part of the evaluation process they feel in control, leading to a sense of empowerment.

If possible, invite other teachers to be part of the evaluating process. The final grade can consist of the grades given by pupils as well as by you and other teachers. (Give a 50% weight to pupils' evaluations and 50% weight to teachers' evaluations.)

V. ADAPTING PROJECTS FOR PUPILS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

In almost every class, and at every level, there are pupils with special needs: ADD, reading difficulties or the inability to spell correctly a simple three-letter word. How are these pupils going to manage to work on a project? What demands should be made of them? And how is the teacher to evaluate such a project?

Over the years, teachers have become more and more sensitive to pupils with special needs, helping them to achieve 3-, 4- and 5- point Bagrut levels. Similarly, pupils, however serious their difficulties, should be helped in working on a project. Following are some suggestions for helping such pupils:

- Work in groups or pairs, making sure that the LD pupil takes an active part. If s/he has difficulty reading, for example, assign this to another pupil in the group.
- Pupils with spelling problems should hand in work for correction before it is rewritten for a final grade. Typing may be done on a word processor to facilitate corrections, and, of course, no points are deducted for spelling errors.
- Pupils whose handwriting is very poor, but are able to read and write logically, must use a word processor to type their project.
- Give more points for the oral presentation, and

fewer points for the written presentation. The whole project can become an oral presentation for pupils whose reading and writing abilities are almost negligible, with PowerPoint or Astound presentations, illustrations, posters, videos, tape recordings, etc.

VI. ASSESSMENT

Assessment is the process of gathering information about the pupils – what they know and what they can do. The traditional form of assessment is testing, but with projects this is neither practical nor valid. Because projects are an authentic activity regarding both topics and mode of investigation, the type of assessment must also be authentic; i.e., pupils must have a role in the assessment process. Instead of being passive test takers, pupils become active participants in the assessment activities, by helping design the tools for assessment and using them to evaluate themselves and their peers. Furthermore, the tools of assessment (rubrics, checklists, self assessment) are not fixed or permanent once they have been designed. They can be changed or improved upon as needed. Authentic or alternative assessment allows pupils to monitor their own learning along the way and ultimately become more autonomous in their daily planning and work. When we assess a project, we are not only assessing linguistic accuracy but also other aspects of the project, as stated in its aims or goals, such as: content, language, presentation (both written and oral), effort, cognitive development, attitude to learning, collaboration, self discipline, independence and responsibility of the learner.

Project assessment is formative (ongoing throughout the project) and summative. Both these elements are equally important; this should be stressed at the beginning of the project. The best way to assess these elements is by using rubrics. A rubric is an authentic assessment tool, designed to simulate real life activities where pupils are engaged in solving real life problems. First, pupils must be familiarized with rubrics – what they look like, what they contain and how to use them. At a later stage, pupils help design the rubrics. This involvement empowers pupils and as a result, learning becomes more focused and self directed. See: <http://edweb.sdsu.edu/webquest/rubrics/weblessons.htm>

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There are several reasons for using rubrics as assessment tools in projects:

- They allow assessment to be objective and consistent.
- They show pupils how their work will be evaluated and what is expected.
- They make pupils aware of the criteria used in assessing their own and peer performance.
- They provide effective feedback to pupils about their strengths and weaknesses and how they can improve.
- They provide benchmarks and standards of proficiency against which the pupils' performance will be measured.

Other assessment tools include checklists, self assessment and self reflection. Most pupils are familiar with checklists but they should be told that checklists are used throughout the project for monitoring progress and planning work. Self reflection questionnaires also help pupils to focus on their learning and make them aware of areas that need improvement or that require help from the teacher.

To read more about alternative assessment and rubrics, try some of these sites:

<http://www.ericae.net/>

http://www.education-world.com/a_curr/curr248.shtml

<http://www.teachersfirst.com/rubric.shtml>

<http://teachervision.com/tv/curriculum/assess/rubrics.html>

<http://edweb.sdsu.edu/webquest/rubrics/weblessons.htm>

<http://www.sdcoe.k12.ca.us/score/actbank/trubrics.htm>

<http://www.theeducatorsnetwork.com/utt/rubricsgeneral.htm>

<http://www.techtrekers.com/rubrics.html>

<http://www.4teachers.org/projectbased/checklist.shtml>

Simple and straightforward language should be used in assessment tools, especially rubrics, when describing the levels of proficiency. Rubrics also enable the teacher to assess projects efficiently and consistently. A good idea for checking the reliability of your assessment tools is to do inter-rater reliability. Ask other members of staff to evaluate some of the projects using these tools and then compare results. If there is a large discrepancy between grades, then the assessment tools may have to be re-examined and adjusted.

VII. FAQs FOR TEACHERS

What is the best way to introduce the project in class?

Arouse pupils' interest in the overall topic which you have selected. Lead in to the topic either through the course book or introduce the topic through a movie or story. If topics are pupil-generated, search for information on the Internet, or brainstorm to help pupils choose their topic.

Must I teach the prerequisite skills before we start the project?

Yes. This will enable pupils to be more independent and eliminate the necessity for mid-process revision of relevant language and computer skills.

What should I do about pupils who refuse to work in a group and want to work alone?

Although working in a group is an important life skill, some pupils cannot work with others. Unless group work is built into the project (like a webquest where each pupil has a role to play), just point out that working alone is more difficult and involves more work. Rubrics involving group grading will have to be adapted for pupils who work alone.

If pupils are allowed to leave the classroom during project time, how can I be sure that they are working on the project?

Pupils must tell you where they are going. Inform them that there will be spot checks. If they go to the library, ask the librarian to supervise them. When pupils return to the classroom to fill in the work schedule, ask to see their work.

What can be done if one group isn't functioning and cannot proceed with the project?

Before the class divides up into groups, make sure that the members of the group are compatible and will be able to work together. But even with careful planning and thought, things can go wrong. If there are problems, try to regroup. Split up the dysfunctional group and assign each member to another group. If this is not possible, work intensively with the group, helping them to divide the workload and sitting with them every lesson for a short time. Often groups don't function because of personal animosity between members. Try

Focus on Projects

to defuse this by talking to the group and explaining that even in real life we sometimes have to work with people we don't like. Another option is to split the group into pairs or move the "troublemaker" to another group.

What can I do if one of the groups is very weak and cannot manage the project independently?

You can work more intensively with this group by modeling, helping them search for materials, reading aloud or translating articles into English. Alternatively, simplify the project. Let them write less and present more visually, or help them choose an easier topic and find a simpler research question. Make sure groups are heterogeneous with regard to language level.

What can I do if there is no Internet access in the school? How can pupils find resource materials?

If pupils have Internet access at home, let them search for material as homework. Internet services are also available at most public libraries. Remember that before Internet was available, pupils used books, newspapers and magazines as information sources. Once pupils have chosen their topics, ask the school librarian to provide a list of books with relevant information. The problem with using Hebrew resources is that pupils have to translate the material into English. This may be difficult and they may need your help in summarizing the main ideas and translating them into English.

Are projects with research questions the only kind of projects we can do?

No, there are other kinds of projects as well. Webquests are Internet-based projects and require each member of the group to take on a particular role and research part of the answer to a particular question. Usually, in webquests, the group has to complete an authentic task based on the information gathered and goals set. Another type of project is literature-based and requires pupils to research the life and times of an author and discuss influences on his/her life, or draw social, political or literary conclusions from the text. Weaker classes can do an in-depth investigation of the material without a research question. Keep the topic narrow so that pupils are not swamped with information.

Reference

Israel Ministry of Education, 2001. *English Curriculum: Principles and standards for learning English as a foreign language for all grades*. Jerusalem.



Gail, Ruth and Jaye are all experienced junior high and high school teachers. Gail is the National Counselor for IT and curriculum integration, and coordinates the Branco Weiss Wide Angle Teachers' Center. Ruth is a didactic tester for Nitzan and is co-author of Teaching English Spelling, published by Cambridge University Press. Jaye is the National Counselor for project work and is a counselor in the Rural Education Administration.

APPENDIX A Using the web

1. Searching the web

One of the major factors holding teachers back from using computers and the Internet in class is the feeling that pupils know more than they do on the subject. A good working knowledge of search engines enables the teacher to act as a true facilitator.

A search engine is a website that indexes other websites. When you visit a search engine website, you submit the information you are looking for and the search engine searches its database for matching information. If you were to ask a person what they know about motor cars, for example, that person most likely knows that motor vehicles are the same as motor cars. Search engines do not understand the information you send in to them – they simply recognize text, and therefore will only find the information that contains the exact words typed in. This point should always be kept in mind when searching. If the initial results are not satisfactory, try again with similar or related words. In the future, search engines will also have built-in thesauri but this is not yet the case.

There are many different kinds of search engines and new ones are being developed all the time. Different search engines have different specialties, and search according to **categories, key words, or questions.**

Engines that search according to category

Many search engines use categories, but in this article we will look at *Yahoo*. *Yahoo* is probably the most comprehensive categorized search engine on the Internet.

Practice searching with *Yahoo*

Type the following in the location bar:

www.yahoo.com



Click on any category of interest, and then on sub-categories. Try to understand how *Yahoo* is organized and the most efficient ways to get around the site. Check at least two main categories and note how the page is organized. Look at the different links on the *Yahoo* pages but **don't** click on any

sites themselves at this stage. Take your time exploring *Yahoo*. If you click the arrow on the right of your back button, you will see that you can "jump" back a few steps and don't need to revisit the pages one by one.

After exploring the structure of *Yahoo*, follow these links outside the *Yahoo* site. You can see if you are still in the *Yahoo* site by looking at the address bar on your browser. Try this guided search:

- Go back to the first page of *Yahoo* (www.yahoo.com)
- Scroll down and click on **Education**.
- Scroll down and click on **K12**.
- Scroll down and choose an area you are interested in.
- Scroll down and look at some of the links in your area of choice - follow some of them and explore the sites. (This is where you leave the *Yahoo* website.)

Do the links fulfill your expectations? Is the content what you thought it would be? Go back to *Yahoo* and try another category. Choose any topic that sparks your interest and follow the links. Set a time limit for yourself when embarking on a search of this kind, and remember to bookmark sites you may want to visit again.

There is so much information that it is sometimes difficult to choose where to go first. You may be looking for something specific when something else catches your eye and you click to go there instead. You then follow the links from this "spontaneous" click and find yourself, an hour later, having taken a completely different journey from the one you expected. Remember this when you ask your pupils to search for information on the web. They may easily get carried away in totally different directions and it is important to structure tasks so that this doesn't happen within the framework of your planned lesson.

You now have some concept of how a categorized search engine works. To become completely familiar with *Yahoo*, visit it a few more times. It is a process of trial and error – learning for yourself how to get around.

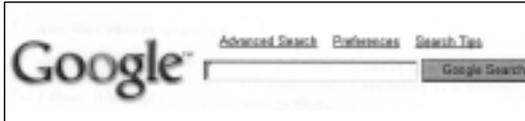
Engines that search according to key words

Google is an engine which searches for pages on the web according to **key words** that you enter into the search box. It is a huge database that "spiders" the text from different websites on the web and keeps this text in its database. When you type in a word to search for information, it searches its own database for the word/words. *Google* works relatively quickly and usually produces good results.

It is important to remember that *Google* is only a machine. It does not really understand language, it only matches your words with words in its database. You may not always get the results you expect, but you may be overwhelmed by thousands of results.

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Try a simple search with *Google*. Think of something you would like to search for and type in www.google.com. You will see the following:



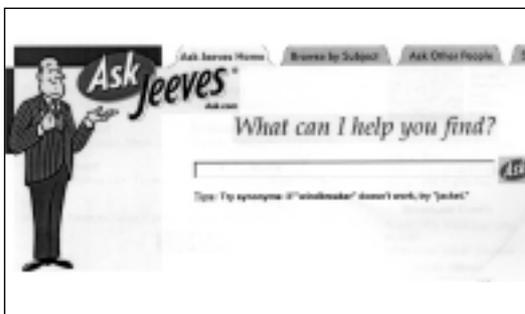
Click your mouse in the empty text box and you will see the cursor flashing. Type in what you want to search for and then click the "Google Search" button. After a few seconds, you will get a page of results. You can scan the results and click on links you want to follow. You can also choose to click on the "I'm Feeling Lucky" button, in which case *Google* will return only one result which may or may not satisfy you. If the results are not satisfactory, try using different words or different combinations of words.

Since pupils study English as a foreign language, have them check their spelling when searching. They can keep a Word document open and type their search queries there first and check the spelling.

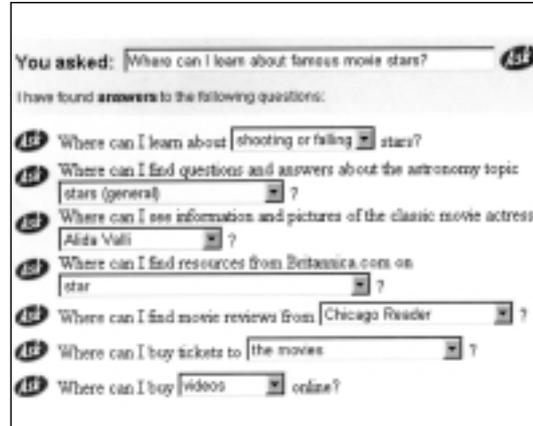
Once you feel comfortable with *Google*, you can compare the results from *Google* to the results from *Yahoo*. Note that *Google* also has a category search and *Yahoo* also has a regular search. Explore these two search engines and become more familiar with them.

Engines that answer questions

Another well-known search engine is "*Ask Jeeves*," named after the famous English butler who fulfilled all his master's needs. *Ask Jeeves* works according to a different logic than *Google* and *Yahoo*. It attempts to answer your question. Try a simple search with *Ask Jeeves*. Type in www.ask.com. You will see a page like this:

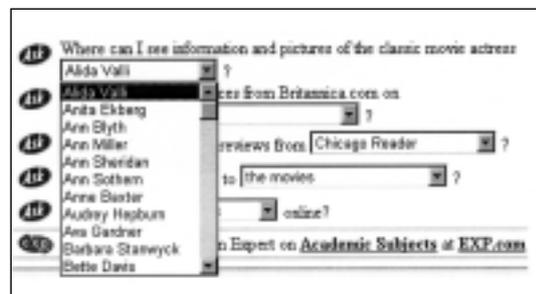


If you type in the question:
Where can I learn about famous movie stars?
You would get a reply that would look like this:



The most logical option for the original question asked would be: Where can I see information and pictures of the classic movie actress _____. If you are searching for a male movie star, you may decide to reword your question to: Where can I learn about famous **male** movie stars?

Each question posed by *Jeeves* offers a drop-down menu to choose from. By clicking on the arrow you will see all the different options:



This list continues and if you scroll down, you will see many names in alphabetical order according to first name, ending with:



Focus on Projects

When you find the name you are looking for, click on it and then click on the "ask" button to the left of the question and you will be taken to the appropriate page. You can always go back to *Ask Jeeves* and ask another question or choose one of the other options.

Think about which search engine you would use in which circumstances and which search engines you would suggest that your pupils use. You can prepare a comparison chart for the three search engines you have been exploring to help you organize your thoughts.

Search engines for kids

Using these search engines with pupils offers the following advantages.

1. They usually do not contain links to websites with adult or offensive material. (Most of the sites are screened and filtered.)
2. The level of English (vocabulary, genre, style and register) on the websites is usually targeted at pupils.
3. The search engines themselves are more user-friendly. Check out some of the search engines for pupils as detailed on p. 34:

Reference tools and encyclopedias on the web

The web has many reference tools and encyclopedias that can be used for finding information.

Look at the different links to reference tools available on *Yahoo*:

Almanacs (57)	Encyclopedia (38757)
Archives (147)	Flags (643)
Ask An Expert (107)	Geography (639)
Bibliography (134)	Journals (64)
Books (54)	Knowledge Management (762)
Dictionaries (1187)	Libraries (2298)
Directories (227)	Maps (286)
Education (35437)	Museums (2820)

Each link leads to another page of links full of resources.

Some reference sources are not free of charge; check this out before sending pupils there. (Your school library or school district may have subscriptions to some of these sources.)

Because the abundance of information and reference tools on the web can be mind boggling, try to guide pupils to specific reference tools - choose a few dictionaries or thesauri for them. Suggest resources that you have tried out.

An excellent resource for reading further about specialized search skills is:

Mining the 'Deep Web' With Specialized Drills, by Lisa Guernsey:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/01/25/technology/25SEAR.html>
New York Times, Technology section, January 25th, 2001

2. Citing from the web

Information from the web should be added to the bibliography. The important components to include when citing from the web are:

The name of site / page / publication

The name of article

The exact Internet address of the article

The date it was accessed

The author

It is important to teach pupils that they must cite this information - they cannot take information from the Internet and not include it as a bibliographical reference. Exact details to be included should be discussed with the school librarian and be in accordance with the level required of pupils when referencing a regular bibliography.

For more in-depth readings on citing from the web, try the following links:

Electronic Reference Formats Recommended by the American Psychological Association © 1999, 2000 American Psychological Association. See Copyright and Permissions for policy on distribution and reuse. Last update: January 10, 2001:

<http://www.apa.org/journals/webref.html>

Citing World Wide Web Information Sources, Chico High School Library

<http://dewey.chs.chico.k12.ca.us/cite.html>

The following page has links to many connected issues, including copyright and fair use:

Web Works by Martin Irvine, W.W. Norton & Co, Chapter 5, Tracking, Managing, and Citing Resources on the Web (the webpage is a page of links to accompany chapter 5):
<http://www.wwnorton.com/webworks/ww5.htm>

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APPENDIX B
Guidelines for pupils

DOING A RESEARCH PROJECT

Step 1: Define your problem or question

Think about what interests you, what you already know, and what you want to know.

What interests you?				
What do you already know about the subject?				
What more would you like to know?				

(This grid is based on a **K-W-L** thinking organizer, where you write what you **K**now, what you **W**ant to know and what you have **L**earned.)

What you are doing here leads to a research question.

Step 2: Decide what sources of information you can use

There are many information sources you can use: artifacts, books, computers, CD-ROMs, graphs/charts/tables, encyclopedias, Internet, magazines, newspapers, TV/video/audio sources, and, of course, people.

The grid below is useful in identifying and keeping track of different sources of information.

Name _____	Research Question	
SEEKING INFORMATION		
Using more than one source of information will give you a clearer understanding of your topic. Look at the following sources and:		
1. Check, in Column 2, the sources that are available for you to use.		
2. Detail them in Column 3; for example, if you are using magazines, write the names of the magazines.		
3. Write any other sources you are using in Column 1 and detail them in Column 3.		
Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
Artifacts		
Books		
Computer/CD-ROM		
Graphs, charts, tables		
Encyclopaedia		
Internet		
Magazines		
Newspapers		
People		
TV/Video/Audio sources		

Step 3: Locate your online sources

Encyclopedias online

Encyclopedia Britannica
www.britannica.com

A basic encyclopedia: Encyclopedia.com
<http://www.encyclopedia.com/>

A more detailed encyclopedia: Funk and Wagnalls
<http://funkandwagnalls.com/>

Quotations: Bartlett's Familiar Quotations
<http://www.bartleby.com/99/>

Biographical dictionary, to help you find information about specific people: <http://www.s9.com/biography/>

Links to many other reference sources: Bartleby's
<http://www.bartleby.com/reference/>

Maps: a comprehensive collection of maps from all over the world:
http://sunsite.informatik.rwth-aachen.de/Maps/Map_collection.html

Atlas: Atlapedia: maps, country information and more
<http://www.atlapedia.com/>

Language translator: translates words into 6 different languages <http://translator.go.com/>

Dictionary: Webster's Dictionary
<http://www.m-w.com/netdict.htm>

General information: InfoPlease Almanac
<http://www.infoplease.com/>

Magazines online

Electric Library: subscribe to this service for access to magazines, newspapers, TV transcripts and more
<http://www.elibrary.com/>

Magazines online: links to hundreds of magazines online
<http://www.newsdirectory.com/news/magazine/>

MagPortal: a database of thousands of magazine articles that have been posted online (Users can easily search for a topic and print out the articles that are useful.)
<http://www.magportal.com/>

Newsweek: full text of all editions of Newsweek since February, 1997, are available free through
<http://www.newsweek.com/>

Newspapers online

New York Times: daily summaries of the major news stories
<http://www.nytimes.com/learning/pupils/pop/index.html>

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Newspapers from around the world
<http://www.teleport.com/~links/newsg.shtml>

Newspapers online
<http://dir.yahoo.com/News/Newspapers/>

Libraries online

East Greenwich Public Library
<http://www.ultranet.com/~egrlib/>

HELIN (Higher Education Library Information Network):
materials in college and university libraries in Rhode Island
<http://www.ultranet.com/~egrlib/>

Internet Public Library
<http://www.ipl.org/>

The Library of Congress research tools
<http://www.loc.gov/tr/tools.html>

Internet sites with well organized information

These sites will help you find ANYTHING you need.

Homework Wizard: let the Homework Wizard guide you
through your projects.

<http://www.tcfg.com/feb99/hw3.html>

BJ Pinchbeck's website: "If you can't find it here, then you
just can't find it."

<http://school.discovery.com/pupils/homeworkhelp/bjpinchbeck/>

Jim Thorpe High School: alphabetical list of many useful
topics

<http://www.jtasd.k12.pa.us/highschool/library/index.htm>

Library spot
<http://www.libraryspot.com/>

Librarian's Index to the Internet
<http://lii.org/>

Search engines

Ask Jeeves: www.askjeeves.com

Google: www.google.com

Yahoo: www.yahoo.com

Direct Hit: <http://www.directhit.com/>

Some simplified search sites for pupils:

Ask Jeeves for Kids: www.ajkids.com

Yahooligans: www.yahooligans.com

Studyweb links for learning: www.studyweb.com

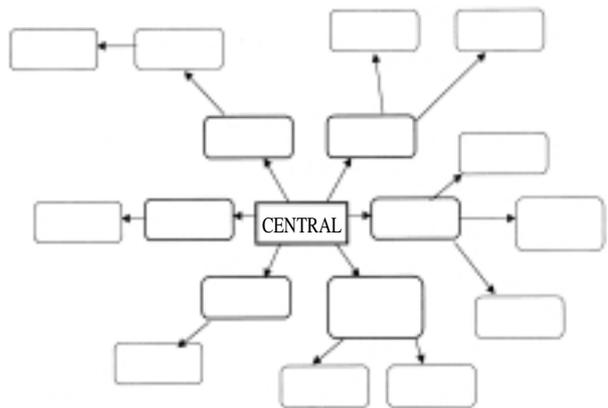
AOL kids: www.aol.com/netfind/kids

The Internet Public Library Youth Division:
www.ipl.org/youth

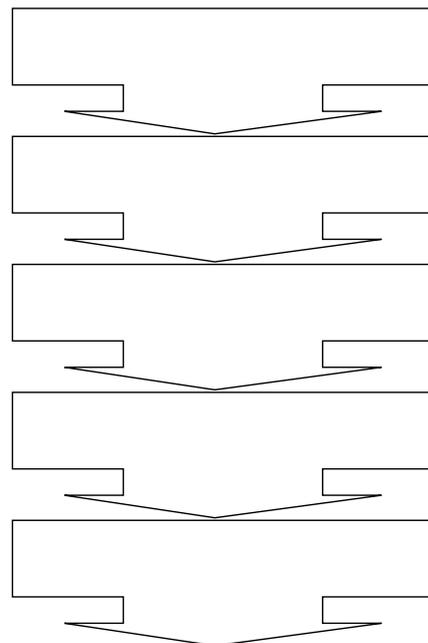
Step 4: Start reading, printing and taking notes

While you are reading and taking notes, one or more of these
graphic organizers may help you:

WEBBING: This is an excellent way to begin and track project
work.

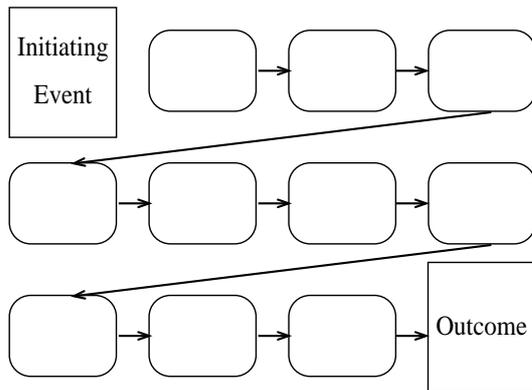


FLOW CHART: This type of organizer is a way of showing
how events are linked by time or consequences.

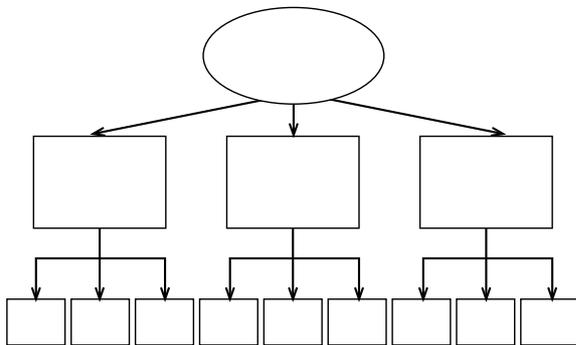


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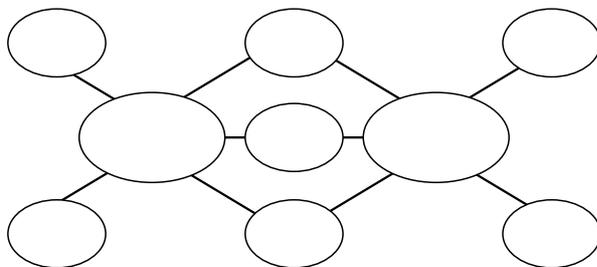
LINEAR STRING: Similar to the flow chart, but the stages are defined in more detail, or there are more stages.



HIERARCHY DIAGRAM: An organizer to be used to group items (things, people, places, events, ideas, etc.) into categories.



DOUBLE CELL DIAGRAM: Links two items by characteristics or attributes and clarifies differences and similarities.



Step 5: Organize all the data

While searching for information, keep these things in mind:

- Is the information relevant to the topic you have chosen? Don't waste time on irrelevant information.
- Pay attention to the Internet page construction – spelling, grammar and the URL (address). Those may be clues to the quality of the information.
- Note the copyright date. Sometimes it is important to have the most recent information.
- Make exact notes of all sources for your bibliography.
- Be aware of the difference between fact and opinion. Just because something is in print or on your screen does not necessarily mean it is true. Watch for propaganda or biased information.
- Notice when sources agree or disagree – and check those that disagree.

Step 6: Write your paper

You can find a guide to writing your paper at

<http://www.angelfire.com/wi/writingprocess/>

While you are writing your project paper, you should be thinking about:

- comparing the information from your sources
- including what you feel are the most important points
- eliminating information that is repeated or does not belong
- organizing the information in a new way to answer your research question
- organizing key ideas in a logical order
- making sure that what you are writing is in your own words, and not copied directly from your sources
- keeping your information clear
- using correct language and spelling
- quoting correctly and writing a bibliography

Your paper should consist of six basic stages:

1. A cover page
2. A table of contents
3. An introduction to your topic
4. The body of your work (two to three chapters)
5. A summary or conclusion, including what you have learned from the project
6. A bibliography – an alphabetical list of all the sources used in your research.

Write a draft and hand it in for your teacher to check. Correct your draft according to your teacher's comments and write the final copy.

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Step 7: Evaluate how well you did

This step is not easy and demands that you be critical about your work. Think about these items when you are evaluating, and use this checklist.

SELF EVALUATION CHECKLIST – BEFORE HANDING IN WORK

1. I evaluated at frequent intervals while I was researching and preparing my project.	
2. I looked back on the research process, and decided what worked and what didn't.	
3. I gathered feedback from others.	
4. I judged my work, considering what I could change in order to improve it.	
5. I used a variety of resources.	
6. I answered the research question.	
7. I included a cover page and a table of contents.	
8. I started with an introduction and ended with a summary.	
9. I wrote the bibliography correctly.	
10. I looked for the strengths and weaknesses in my writing.	
11. I checked for language and spelling mistakes.	
12. I used suitable vocabulary.	
13. I handed in the draft on time.	
14. I corrected according to my teacher's suggestions	
15. I handed in the final work on time.	

DOING AN ORAL PRESENTATION IN CLASS

Your oral presentation is your opportunity to:

- demonstrate your knowledge and in-depth understanding of your topic.
- use visual, audio, computer-generated and other aids to make your presentation interesting and relevant to your audience.
- practice and demonstrate your ability to express yourself in English.
- present your information in an informative and creative way that will stimulate your audience to ask questions.
- show what you know and what you are able to do.

Here are some tips to help you prepare for your presentation:

1. Before you hand in your final project, make sure that everyone in the group has read it through from beginning to end so you are all familiar with all parts of the project.
2. Brainstorm with your group what you think are the highlights of the research and what main ideas or concepts you want to present. Write your ideas down on paper.
3. Choose four or five main points and think of ways to present them. Make sure your type of presentation suits your topic.
 - Make a poster showing a timeline of main events in the life of a famous person.
 - Draw a map showing the route of a famous explorer.
 - Build a model of the discoveries of a famous scientist.
 - Play music or a song that adds atmosphere to the topic.
 - Display appropriate pictures or photographs.
 - Roleplay the personalities who are important to your topic.
4. Once you have decided how to present your research, make notes and delegate tasks to each member of the group.
5. At this stage, discuss your ideas with your teacher to get some feedback.
6. Remember that your presentation has a time limit, so make sure it is not too long.
7. Meet with the group and work on the different parts of the presentation.
8. Write a rough script of what each person will say, although you will not actually use it in the presentation.
9. Do not learn the script by heart but practice it a few times so that everything runs smoothly and everyone knows his/her role.
10. If possible, rehearse in front of a friend or parent to get feedback about your presentation, concerning things such as:
 - Are your main points clear?
 - Is your oral presentation easy to understand?
 - Do you speak clearly?
 - Do you speak fluently? (This will come with practice.)
 - Is your presentation interesting?
11. After receiving feedback, try to improve your presentation.

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12. Look at the rubric that will be used to evaluate your presentation and make sure you have taken everything into account (length, clarity of speech, etc.).
13. On the day of your presentation, make sure you bring all your visual aids to school and check that the equipment you need is working.

Here is a graphic organizer to plan your oral presentation.

Planning Stages	Comments
Main ideas and /or concepts in research project	1. 2. 3. 4.
Suggestions for presentation	1. 2. 3. 4.
Possibilities for sound and visual aids	music songs pictures photographs maps models website
Electronic equipment needed	computer presentation video film clips tape recorder computer – Internet connection
Division of work	1. 2. 3. 4.
We can get help from the	librarian English teacher computer technician / teacher arts and crafts teacher parents other experts
Check rubrics	
Final rehearsal and feedback	

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On the day of your presentation, use this checklist to make sure you have everything organized.

	Yes	No
1. We have all the equipment that we need and it is in working order.		
2. We have spoken to the relevant people about the special equipment, if needed.		
3. We have costumes, masks, makeup, etc. with us.		
4. We have all other visual and audio aids with us.		
5. We have practiced and rehearsed our presentation a number of times and feel ready to present.		
6. We have delegated roles to each member of the group.		
7. We have all read over the written work and are ready to answer questions and show our understanding of the topic to the best of our abilities.		

Presenting your project can be a satisfying experience, as you are now the “experts” on the subject. The best way to demonstrate this is by making sure your presentation is interesting, engages the audience and stimulates questions and responses.

FAQS FOR PUPILS

What topic will I do my project on?

You and your group will decide together. Once you have thought of a topic, tell your teacher so s/he can let you know if it is suitable or not.

How will we find information about our topic?

During class time, as well as at home, your entire group will look for information about your topic. Resources to use include Internet (your teacher will be able to give you suitable addresses), encyclopedias, magazines, newspapers, books and interviews with experts on the subject.

Can I just copy straight out of the book and put this into my project?

No! All the resource material you use must be photocopied and put into your working file. Your final paper must be written in your own words. If you use Hebrew sources, you must translate them into English.

What is a working file?

This is the file that the group keeps. It contains all your resource material, your rough drafts, notes that anyone in the group made, a weekly work schedule saying what each member of the group did that day in class, and pictures/ photographs/drawings that you are collecting to put into your final work.

Why do we have to keep a working file?

Part of the grade you will get for the project is for the working file. This shows your progress, effort and seriousness throughout the six weeks.

How else will the project be graded?

You and your teacher will decide together on the weight of each section before the start of the project. Your teacher will also tell you how much the project will be worth in your semester grade. Project sections include the working file, the final written paper, the oral presentation and individual effort and contribution.

What do you mean by the oral presentation?

This is another way of presenting your topic to the class. For example, you may make a video or a poster or act out a short dialogue or make a model or a map – in fact, anything which is not written.

Who will help me with the project?

Your group will help you. You will also be able to sit with the teacher during class, as there will be no frontal lessons. You can also find teachers/experts at school to help you.

What are some of the things we will be doing in class?

- discussing and planning with your group
- reading and making notes
- looking for resources
- discussing with your teacher the group’s problems and progress
- writing the first draft
- reading and correcting drafts from other members of the group
- helping each other
- using a dictionary for correct spelling and the meaning of a word
- collecting pictures or drawings
- interviewing experts

Must the final paper be typed?

This will depend on your teacher’s instructions. If it is written, it must be in a very legible handwriting. Part of the grade for the final paper is for presentation.

Focus on Projects

How long must the final paper be?

Your teacher will give you clear instructions about the length of the written project, as well as how many sources you must use.

Can I give the draft copy to the teacher to correct?

Yes. This is a good idea, as part of the grade is for accurate language.

What if someone in the group isn't doing his/her part of the work?

Discuss this with your teacher as soon as possible. The group can also try to help the person to be more responsible. Try dividing the workload equally but make sure that each person is given work that s/he can manage.

Will we get any homework during the project time?

Your homework will be connected to the project. Sometimes you may be expected to look for material at home and bring it to school, or do some writing at home. You may have to prepare something for the rest of the class based on your project.