

# Library Research Instruction: Information for Teachers

MCPL Children's Librarians are eager to work with teachers. By working together, we can provide your students with a successful research experience.

How To Make the Most of Your Library Visit

1. Please schedule your visit in advance. You can use our online form to [Schedule a Library Visit](#).
2. Please dedicate about 90 minutes for your visit. This allows time for the librarian to provide instruction on how to effectively search our library catalog and other online resources, and gives students time for independent exploration. More time may be needed if students will be checking out materials.
3. Research tours are most effective when the librarians know ahead of time what topics the students have chosen or have been assigned. We can then tailor instruction to student needs.
4. If you just want to bring students to the library for independent study and do not expect formal instruction from a librarian, we still appreciate a courtesy call to prepare our reference staff for a large group visit.

What Does Research Instruction Include?

Our research instruction is designed for students in grades 1-6. We will customize instruction based on grade level and the requested topics and needs of the class, but in general, the areas covered include :

- how to use the MCPL catalog : basic searching and advanced search strategies
- use of print reference sources : general and specialized encyclopedias, almanacs, atlases, and other pertinent sources
- electronic reference sources : includes magazine and newspaper databases and many other reference tools
- internet searching, including MCPL's "Homework Help" page
- a brief tour of the children's department so students know where different materials are located and how they are organized

If you wish to spend a large part of the day in the library and would like a place for students to have lunch, we can investigate the availability of meeting rooms in the library where your class may eat a brown bag lunch.

What We Need From Teachers

1. An alphabetical list of students in your class with their birthdates. Please send this as soon as possible after your visit date has been confirmed. We use this information to determine whether each student has a library card in good standing. In return we will let you know which students may have problems with their cards that should be resolved before their visit to the library, and which students will need time to obtain a library card while they are here.
2. A list of your students' topics of research. Please include as much clarifying information as possible. The earlier we receive this information, the better chance we have to make sure there are materials available on your students' research topics.
3. Students who are prepared for their visit to the library. Please remind students to bring a paper and a pencil or pen. Some teachers ask students to bring additional materials, such as research assignment papers, clipboards, computer discs, etc.

Tips on Preparing Students for Their Library Visit

Feel free to print out and give students the attached [Student Research Guide](#) (pdf) to help them

think through and make notes on their topic of study. You may also wish to review with students some research steps to follow:

1. Choosing a topic: We find that students have a more productive library visit if they have given their topic some thought before arriving. You might wish to brainstorm with students and approve a topic beforehand. Help students think of words that describe their topic. For instance, terms relating to "pioneers" might include : settlers, Oregon Trail, gold rush, and many others. If you wonder whether a topic might be too obscure or narrow for a student's project, you can check the library's catalog from school. This will give you an idea of the library's holdings on a particular subject. The MCPL catalog is found at: [mcpl.monroe.lib.in.us/](http://mcpl.monroe.lib.in.us/) .
2. Focusing on a topic: Help students think about "What do I hope to learn about my chosen subject?" Or: "What questions do I have about my topic?" Making a list can help students focus more effectively and makes the project less overwhelming.
3. Using the right research tools: During the library visit, we'll talk about the different types of sources of information and how they can be used. Students will want to keep in mind the types of information that might be useful to their unique topics. Besides text, what other types of information would be helpful? Maps? Charts? Photos? etc.
4. Citing sources: Please remind students that they should keep notes on where they found information on their research topic. Making note of the author, title, publisher, and year of publication will provide for their bibliography and help them to find the source again if needed. See the Research and Style Manual for Works Cited for Grades 1-6 . for examples of how to cite different sources.

NOTE: If your class will be arriving by bus, a bus pull-in is provided in front of the library on Kirkwood Avenue. Please bring students to the first floor children's department, unless we have specified another meeting room.

Thank you for collaborating with us. We look forward to seeing you in the library!

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Links  
[1] <https://mcpl.info/childrens/library-research-instruction/information-teachers>  
[2] <https://mcpl.info/childrens/schedule-library-visit-or-research-instruction>  
[3] <https://mcpl.info/sites/default/files/MCPL%20Student%20Research%20Guide.pdf>  
[4] <http://mcpl.monroe.lib.in.us/>  
[5] [http://www.kathyschrock.net/uploads/3/9/2/2/392267/worksited\\_1\\_6.pdf](http://www.kathyschrock.net/uploads/3/9/2/2/392267/worksited_1_6.pdf)