

# How to Research Effectively for the Viva Voce



## Organise yourself

Come up with a basic schedule for your research. When does it need to be completed by? What smaller goals can you break it into and what are the deadlines for those? What will you do if you get behind? Do you need someone to check in with each week and update them on your progress?

## Control your environment

Find a quiet, organised space that allows you to focus. Avoid interruptions from others - put some headphones on and pretend you are listening to music! Don't be tempted to plug those headphones in though... unless you're listening to music for your viva!



## Have a basic question/focus in mind

Your research will guide the final question or focus statement for you Viva Voce, but you need to have a reasonably good idea of what you want to focus on before you start. **DEVELOP THIS IDEA WITH YOUR TEACHER.** And if you change your mind at any time, see your teacher about it first!



## Look for reputable sources

Don't be afraid of Wikipedia. It's a great place to start if you want a quick overview of a topic, but it NOT a reliable source. The hyperlinks that are cited at the bottom of each Wikipedia page are what to look for. Reliable information often comes from sources that are run or created by people who aren't in it for the likes, the shares, the hits or the money. Look for websites that have expert authors, who cite their sources. Sound information also comes from .edu and .gov websites. **ALSO** – it's a good idea to note the publication date of your sources.

## Bibliography hunting

Once you've found one good source related to your topic, go straight to its bibliography and note down all of the resources you think might be relevant to your topic. Search for them.



### Forgotten Sources

Video and audio is often forgotten when researching a topic for a Viva Voce. After all, this is what the viva voce is all about. A YouTube, Spotify or iTunes playlist will be invaluable as you get further into your research.

### Understand how to use advanced search tools

All search engines allow you to change certain parameters of your search. Some useful tools when searching online include changing the location for a more local search, placing a minus sign (-) in front of a word to exclude it from the results and search for the most recently updated articles or websites.



### Always write basic notes *yourself*

Take your own, **handwritten** notes. You just need to write dot points, but this action will be VERY beneficial in helping you to retain the information, which is vital when you're going to be talking to a marker about it during your Viva Voce! ALWAYS try to write your information in your own words, but make sure it's accurate too. Don't summarise the information so much that it changes the meaning.

**and finally...**

### ASK FOR HELP!

Your teachers, peers and family are all there to help you. Your teachers have all done this before, so you have an invaluable resource right there. Apart from being trained educators, you may even be surprised to find that they often know a great deal about what you are researching! Your friends and family can also be a great help in noticing details that you may have missed. Or they can help you in recalling information through asking some basic questions.

No matter what, if you get stuck, ASK FOR HELP!

