



What Is Research?

“Research is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose.”

~Nora Zeale Hurston

***re*-search**

studious inquiry or examination; especially: investigation or experimentation aimed at the discovery and interpretation of facts, revision of accepted theories or laws in the light of new facts, or practical application of such new or revised theories or laws

From: <http://www.merriam-webster.com/>

Remember that research is searching again and again (*re* search). In the process of doing research, you will be looking at information that others have looked at before, trying to see something that they have not seen.

Research is:

- Driven by a question or problem that then guides the process.
- Seeking information with a clear goal in mind.
- A process, which works best when done step-by-step. The steps may need to be repeated, as the process is reiterative.
- Collection and interpretation of data in an attempt to resolve the problem or answer the question.
- Going beyond facts and old ideas.
- Taking a new look at the information and taking a stand.

Research is *not*:

- Just gathering information.
- Rearranging facts.
- Combining a paragraph from an encyclopedia with a couple of paragraphs from Web sites. That's plagiarism.
- Rewording each phrase and citing each source. That's just a summary of facts with someone else's name on them.

Words for the wise student:

- Remember, you must know what you are looking for in order to find it.
- Allow for surprises. You may find possibilities more fascinating than you imagined.

“The way to do research is to attack the facts at the point of greatest astonishment.”

~Celia Green