

## Making connections

When I do research I am looking for clues. The clues are bits of information that will help me complete my project. I need to gather as many clues, or bits of information, as possible. To do that I need to make connections between one clue and another, just like a detective trying to solve a mystery.

Here's an example. It's a project about local history. I begin my research by looking for clues in myself and my classroom, and work my way out from there.

This could be a good way of filling in the diagram, or plan, with the circles. See the video for an explanation of this diagram.

### Me and my classroom

I begin my research by examining myself. This is not exactly looking at myself in a mirror or under a magnifying glass, but it's the same idea.

For example, in my pocket I have a receipt for something I bought in a local shop. I wonder how long that shop has been there for. If it's been there a long time, that makes it historical. I make a note to find out, and find out what other shops have been here a long time.

OK, there's not much else in my pockets apart from fluff. But I can still find out a lot from myself - by asking questions. Asking yourself questions is a really important part of doing research. Detectives do this all the time, to check what they have learned.

So I begin by asking myself, what do I already know about local history?

History means things that have happened in the past. If I am not sure what things count as history, then it's a good idea to ask my teacher. Same goes if our project is about science or music, or any topic.

So let's think... well, I know that there is an old graveyard next to the church with people from long ago buried in it. I make a note of that.

I also know there is a war memorial with the names of local men who fought and died during wars long ago. I think one of the wars began in 1914. I make a note of this too.

There is also a ruined old stone building next to the river. I wonder what it was used for? Better write this down as well.

In our classroom we also have a small book about local history. The words are quite difficult to follow, but it has lots of pictures with captions that are easy to read. We can see some places that we recognise, and a few that have changed a lot, with people wearing very different clothes and no cars on the road - just horses and carts! an address for the local-history society who made it.

We can do two things with this book. First, we can examine the pictures and read the words to get as much information as possible. Then we could use the address to contact the local-history society by phone or email.

By thinking about what I know about history, and finding useful things in the classroom, such as the local-history book, I am beginning to make connections between clues.

## My home, family and friends

Here's a connection. When I asked myself what I knew about local history, I realised that my dad told me a story about what my great-granddad did during the second world war. It was an exciting story but I don't remember the details. I do know my great-granddad was from the local area. So I'm going to go home and ask dad about the story again and write it down.

I wonder what else I can find out by asking family or friends about local history? Family and friends are really important people in any project. They are like keys that can open doors for you. They tell you about useful stuff you didn't know, they point you in the right direction for finding more clues, and they can help your teacher correct you if you are barking up the wrong tree.

### My community - people and places

Here's another connection. We can use the email address or phone number of the local-history society that we found in the book in the classroom to contact the society. Our goal here is to see if one of their experts will come and talk to us, and tell us some interesting stories about local history.

What other interesting people and places are in our local community? A castle? Or maybe an old water mill?

## Library and internet

The library and the internet are really useful for making connections between clues.

Let's take the internet first. By going online my classmates and I can find contact details so we can email local-history societies, or historical visitor sites like castles and museums. We can also find web pages that add to the information we found in the local-history book, or perhaps explain things we didn't understand.

A great place to go online is your local library. Plus the library is likely to have a lot more books about local history on its shelves. All you need to do is pick them up and start reading - and if you get stuck then remember to ask someone to help you.