

Stage 2: What am I looking for?

Video Transcript

Now you've decided on your topic, it's time to start looking for the things you need.

So what do I need to take my project forward?

I need information.

To get our hands on information, we need to understand the sources of information.

Remember, information isn't just something that's written down. Information is all around us. Potential sources of information are anything we can see, hear, touch, smell and taste.

The sources of information are in two main categories. Primary sources and secondary sources.

So what is a primary source? A primary source is an original item like a letter, or a steam engine, or an animal.

A secondary source, on the other hand, is something that explains what a primary source is.

For example, when you hold a small furry creature in your hand for the first time you are holding a primary source. You can examine the creature and guess that it might be a very furry mouse.

Guessing is an important part of being a researcher, or a detective. But you need to check that guess by doing some more research.

So you need to look up a book about small animals, with words and pictures. By comparing the creature in your hand with those in the book, you can work out that the creature is in fact a hamster.

So if the furry creature is a primary source, how do we describe the book that told you the creature is a hamster? That's right, the book is a secondary source.

To help you understand more about sources of information, complete the activities in this stage.