

Conducting research can be a great way to learn more about a subject like tobacco and, there is a vast amount of information already out there. So, how do you start and what do you do with the information you gather? The following steps will get you started but remember they are only guidelines, and your group may come up with a new unique approach. Be creative and have fun.

## **Create a plan for your project**

How will your research be used? What are some fun activities you can think of to showcase the research you hope to discover? Brainstorm all the ways in which you can bring what you learn in your research to life.

Here are some ideas to get your creative juices flowing:

- Write and illustrate a comic book or story book.
- Write and perform a play about tobacco.
- Create a website
- Write a research report
- Make a documentary audio or video pod cast.
- Create a video or board game

## **Outline a specific Tobacco topic to research**

Now that you've decided how your final project will look try to narrow the topics you will explore. If you spotlight one area of tobacco it will be easier to carry out your research. Focus on one area that you find interesting and may be related to you and your peers. You can also connect your project to something you are learning in school.

For example, you can research the significance of tobacco for a history or civics class. Or, explore the medical effects of nicotine for a health course. Other themes you could center your research around may include:

- Nicotine and addiction
- Tobacco and teen use
- Misperceptions and tobacco use among teens
- Smoking in the movies
- Secondhand smoke and health
- Reasons people start smoking
- Tobacco use in other countries-cultural meaning
- Smoking in music videos

## **Be a research sleuth**

It's time to explore. Now that you have a specific topic and know what your final product will be, where do you find information and resources to understand and support your project? Think of yourself as a detective or sleuth, on a mission to uncover the truth about your topic. Here are some possible avenues to explore on your adventure to find research and information:

- School and Community libraries
- Websites
- Tobacco Control Program-Vermont Department of Health
- First hand personal stories
- Health education teachers, physicians, counselors

### **Detective tips:**

- ***Be flexible***  
You might need to adjust your project according to the information you are discovering.
- ***Ask lots of questions***  
This will not only keep you interested in what you are researching but also help direct your searches.
- ***Get Permission***  
Check with your principal, teachers, advisors and parents to get their approval for your project. They may even be able to help with resources and ideas. You will also need permission from people you interview or to use some published material.
- ***Think outside the Box***  
There are many creative and unique ways to uncover and share information-what can you come up with?
- ***Learn about plagiarizing***  
Plagiarizing is using another person's words or ideas as if they were your own. You need to give credit to the person or resource where you learned the new information. Plagiarizing is like stealing something that doesn't belong to you. It might seem difficult to understand what this means but one way to avoid plagiarizing is to ask yourself this question; would I know this thing or idea I've read, or discovered on my own? Ask a teacher or librarian for further help.
- ***Collaborate***  
Enlist teachers for help. For example, a history teacher could help with the historical meaning of tobacco or a math teacher may offer support for conducting a survey. Seek out people who are experts in their field like physicians, teachers, counselors, prevention specialists etc.

### **Display and show off projects**

Remember, the goal of this project is to educate not only yourselves about tobacco, but others as well. You want your message to be seen and heard by as many people as possible. You've worked hard to research and create a project so don't forget to also plan for it to be seen and heard by others. Here are some tips:

- Invite the press, your local legislators and community member to your play or event.
- Send an invitation to parents and don't forget the Superintendent of your school district.
- Ask teachers if you can spend a few minutes talking about your project in class.
- Create a flyer to highlight your project.