



## BIG 6 Skill™ #1: Task Definition - continued

### EXPLORING THE TOPIC

Explore the topic by following these suggestions:

- **Brainstorm ideas** that you already know or would like to know. Jot down your ideas. (Using a K-W-L chart is helpful!)
- **Read a general encyclopedia article** about your topic. Consider what aspect of the topic interests you the most. Jot down your ideas.
- **Visit the media center** and look up your topic in the computer catalog. What resources are available? Skim over the table of contents in books. Jot down interesting ideas.
- **Use Infotrac** or other online database to see what magazine, news, and reference articles are available on the topic. How has the database organized the topic? Jot down interesting subtopics.
- **Check with the media specialist** or your teacher for other suggestions.

### THIS IS HOW I EXPLORED MY TOPIC IDEAS (Check all that apply!)

DATE _____	KWL Chart _____	Used Online Database _____
GRADE _____	Read article _____	Checked with adult _____
SUBJECT _____	Used Media Center _____	Other: _____
DATE _____	KWL Chart _____	Used Online Database _____
GRADE _____	Read article _____	Checked with adult _____
SUBJECT _____	Used Media Center _____	Other: _____
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GRADE _____	Read article _____	Checked with adult _____
SUBJECT _____	Used Media Center _____	Other: _____

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Period: \_\_\_\_\_

**K-W-L**

What do you know about this topic?

What would you like to know?

What have you learned?

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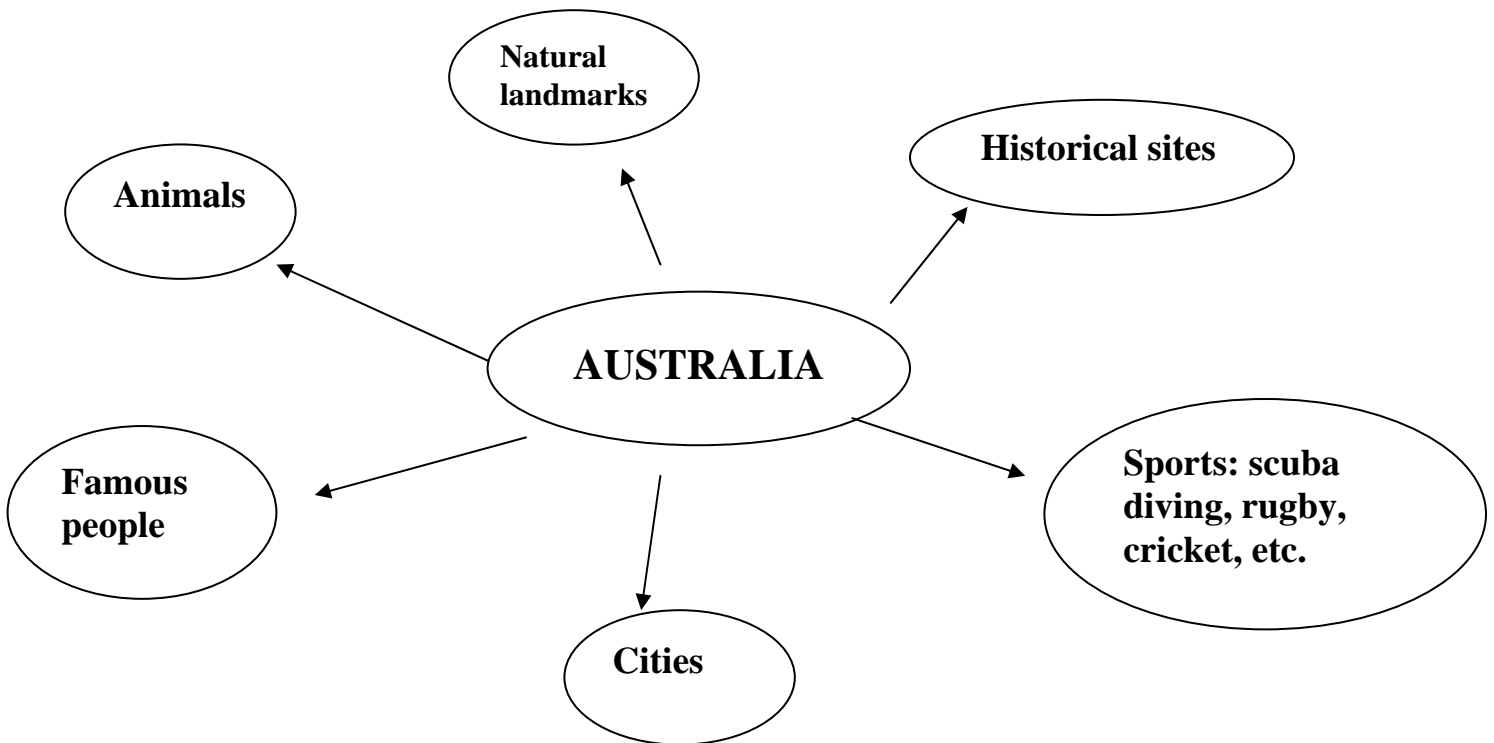
### NARROWING THE TOPIC

Many topics are very general and need to be narrowed to make them more manageable and easier to research. Consider the information you have already found about your topic. What ideas appear over and over? Select a focus which is interesting to you and which has appeared in several of the resources you explored.

#### USING A WEB TO NARROW A TOPIC

Brainstorm ideas that relate to your topic. Write these ideas in a web. What aspects of the topic interest you?

Let's explore topics relating to the country of **Australia**:



The computer program, Inspiration, can help you construct a web.

After brainstorming topic ideas, you must **select only one or two** to continue exploring for your report.

## USING QUESTIONS TO NARROW A TOPIC

- List questions about this focus that you or your readers would want answered.
- Use the "Five W's and the H."

When did Australia become an independent nation?  
Why does Australia have animals found nowhere else in the world?  
What sports are played in Australia?  
Where are some interesting places to visit in Australia?  
Who are some important people in Australia?  
How is the country of Australia governed?

- Choose **one** of these areas as a possible focus. Try asking questions about this focus, using the same strategy ("Five W's and the H").

### Where are some interesting places to visit in Australia?

Who are the aborigines and where do they live?  
What are important historical sites to visit?  
Where will I find the best places to scuba and snorkel?  
When is the best time to visit Australia?  
Why does Australia have so many different cultures?  
How will I get to Australia?

## MY QUESTIONS FOR REPORT TOPICS

Date: _____	Who _____
Grade: _____	What _____
Subject: _____	Where _____
	When _____
	Why _____
	How _____
Other Questions: _____	_____
_____	_____

Date: _____	Who _____
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Subject: _____	Where _____
	When _____
	Why _____
	How _____
Other Questions: _____	_____
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## **BIG 6 Skill™ #1: Task Definition - continued**

### **DEVELOPING A THESIS STATEMENT**

#### **Identify your focus: what is the purpose of your report?**

After brainstorming, reading, exploring media center resources, questioning, and narrowing, you should have a solid focus with many specific questions to answer in your report.

In most cases, your exploration so far will lead you to the next step in the research process: you need to decide on a working thesis statement. This statement explains your purpose in writing the report. The thesis statement is based on the focus you have chosen and should be expressed in a clear and concise way. The thesis statement is the main idea that you are going to prove or support in the body of your report.

Check with your teacher and/or media specialist for approval of your topic, working thesis statement, and the report questions on which you will concentrate to prove or support your thesis statement.

#### **A sample thesis statement:**

Australia is a place that can appeal to a variety of people: adventurous travelers, outdoor enthusiasts, animal lovers, or those interested in cultures other than their own.

As you collect information, you may wish to revise your focus and working thesis statement so that your final focus reflects the information you have collected.

#### **Your final thesis statement should be stated:**

- at the beginning of your outline (or web) page, if required, and
- in the introductory paragraph of your report.

## MY THESIS STATEMENTS

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Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

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