

7.11 Article—Activate a Big6™ Tool to Improve Learning (Grades 7–12)

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Here is a recipe for improvement. It's a twist on an old idea. Maybe you have used a "KWL" graphic organizer before, but one Big6 modification links a series of questions to your research goal. To the old "KWL" Chart, simply add an "H." That one change can turn an old idea into a new, best strategy when you need to make sense of your task and organize a lot of information—its now a "KWHL" Chart.

K—Stands for what you **KNOW** about the subject.

W—Stands for determining what you **WANT** to learn.

H—Stands for **HOW** you can learn more (sources where additional information on the topic can be found).

L—Stands for identifying what you **LEARN** as you read.

The KWHL Chart is a simple, yet effective organizer that you can use for planning and gathering information. Specifically, the KWHL Chart is useful when you need to access prior information on a topic or theme, identify needed primary and secondary resources, develop a plan for accessing resources, identify attributes and characteristics to research, and take notes on what you are learning.

The KWHL Chart is an excellent tool you can use as a plan for investigation. A KWHL inquiry chart can include questions about predictions and/or implications. Additionally, these charts can be used as a basis to formulate a hypothesis, or research question, with confirmation or refutation as your research progresses.

Throughout the research process add information to your KWHL Chart. One trick you may want to try is to use different color marking pens each time you add information to the chart. This technique will give you a visual representation of the knowledge acquired throughout your research experience.

An example of a KWHL Chart has these headings:

- "What we know about _____,"
- "What we want to learn about _____,"
- "How can I find information about _____,"
- "What we learned about _____," and
- "How This Relates to Us."

Other questions you can ask in a matrix format are shown in the example below.

- What do I already know?
- What do I want to find out?
- How am I going to find out?
- What did I learn?