Session Overview

**Title of session:** *EPQ: Choosing a Topic and Focusing a Research Question*

**Length:** This will vary depending on which stage students are at and if the session is delivered as one or individually.

**Learning Objectives:**
During this session, ALL students will:
- Understand the importance of a research question
- Brainstorm potential research topics
- Be shown how to develop a potential idea
- Be introduced to the idea of the research process being ‘recursive’

MOST students will:
- Conduct some initial research and feed this back to their initial ideas, thus developing these and understanding the process
- Understand the different between a primary and secondary resource

SOME students will:
- Combine interests/potential research topics previously considered to be separate
- Develop an idea which was previously not considered
- Come up with a focused research question which relates to an initial idea from their brainstorm

**Resources:** PowerPoint, Internet, Blank Worksheets

**Keywords:** Research, Question, Brainstorm, Idea, Potential, Develop

**Progress check:** Check progress by individual task outcomes

**Activities:**

**STARTER:**
- Introduction to a research question
- Task: Brainstorm potential ideas

**DEVELOPMENT:**
- Listen/respond: Exploring potential topics
- Listen/respond: Preliminary research
- Task: Conducting initial research, developing ideas in line with what is found

**PLENARY:**
- Action plan of what to do next – depending on where a student currently is with their EPQ

**Session most relevant to:** Students interested in extended independent research, or those at the start of or a very early stage of planning their EPQ/coming up with a research topic and/or question.

**Links and signposting:** This session starts students off on their EPQ and therefore links to all further EPQ-based sessions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Slide number(s)</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Exercises Involved:</th>
<th>Aims:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>The Research Question</td>
<td></td>
<td>To help students to understand what a research question is, its purpose and the importance of a good research question to the research process.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>Choosing a Topic</td>
<td>Exercise 1</td>
<td>To introduce students to the type of questions that can lead them to ideas for a research topic. Exercise 1 helps students to brainstorm potential topics, it will also help them to see how some of these topics may link. Students can then revisit exercise one as a starting point for some preliminary research.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>Where to and How to Start your Research</td>
<td>Revisit Exercise 1</td>
<td>To explain the difference between a primary and secondary resource, introduce keywords and concepts and a Boolean search. Although brief it introduces students to some of the terminology used in subsequent packs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Focusing a Research Question</td>
<td></td>
<td>To provide students with examples of un-focused research questions and how these have been focused. It is hoped that students can then apply this to their own work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Getting Started: Narrowing the Topic - Example</td>
<td></td>
<td>To provide an example of how a topic has been researched and the focus narrowed, students will be able to look at the same topic themselves.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>The Next Stage</td>
<td>Exercise 2</td>
<td>To get students to think about the next steps of the EPQ process. This is related to the following session on time management.</td>
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