Notice how I think about what I think I already know. I’ll record my background knowledge on this Post-it and put it up on our chart. But as we watched that video about , I was thinking the information I was hearing is different from what I already knew. I had what we call a misconception. A misconception is something we think we know, but it actually turns out that our information isn’t accurate. I thought (share misconception) but now I’m thinking about the more accurate information I just read. I’ll cross out what I used to think and put the new information I just learned on a Post-it.

**Lesson**

**Connect the New to the Known**

**Purpose**

The background knowledge we bring to our reading colors every aspect of our learning. Readers need to connect what they already know to their new learning in meaningful ways. When kids share what they think they know, this leaves open the possibility that their thinking may change as they learn new information. We explain what misconceptions are—so kids are prepared to change their thinking if need be. Understanding what kids bring in terms of background knowledge guides our teaching.

**Engage**

Kids jot and draw what they already know on Post-its, which we add to an anchor chart headed What We Think We Know About _______. This provides a record of kids’ thinking and learning over time. One thought: to ensure everyone can contribute to the conversation, we sometimes watch a short video or respond to a photograph to jump-start kids’ thinking. In this way, everyone can share something they already know, even if they just observed it in the video or image.

**Model/Guide**

Good readers think about what they already know about a topic before we begin reading. When we pay attention to what we already know about a topic and connect this to new information we are learning, our reading makes more sense.

**Practice**

Now we tell the kids it’s their turn. They will draw and jot information they think they know on their own Post-its. We put these Post-its up on the chart.

**Share**

When the kids come back together, we ask who would like to share out some background knowledge they have. As kids continue to learn new information, they may return to the original chart and correct their initial misconceptions, noting more accurate information and how their thinking changed. We provide the language they will need to talk about how their thinking changed as they read, listened to information, or viewed it:

- My thinking changed .
- I used to think , but now I know .
- Now I understand that .

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**ABOUT RESEARCHER’S WORKSHOP TO GO**

**Curiosity and Inquiry** are at the heart of researcher’s workshop. We give kids the tools to read, view, and listen as they learn new information and explore the world through online resources, as well as books, magazines, and their own observations and experiences.

**Here are a few reasons why we do researchers workshop.**

- Kids are endlessly curious about the world around them. With researcher’s workshop, kids have the time and space to explore something they are genuinely interested in!
- Kids gain ownership of and are engaged in their learning.
- Infusing reading, writing, talking, drawing, and investigating into a research process fosters kids’ creativity and independence.

What are some ways kids can research what they are passionate about using online sources, such as videos, websites, magazine articles, or ebooks or audio books?

**Here’s a list of some favorite resources for research with links.**

- National Geographic videos and articles [kids.nationalgeographic.com](http://kids.nationalgeographic.com)
- National Museum of Natural History Biocube at Home [naturalhistory.si.edu/biocube-home](http://naturalhistory.si.edu/biocube-home)
- Brain Pop Jr. and Brain Pop (free for the time being) [brainpop.com](http://brainpop.com)
- Smithsonian Learning Lab [learninglab.si.edu](http://learninglab.si.edu)
- Wonderopolis [wonderopolis.org](http://wonderopolis.org)

Hein.pub/InquiryIlluminated
RESEARCHER’S WORKSHOP TO GO PROCESS

1 GET ENGAGED!

Kids choose something they are interested in learning more about: volcanoes, an endangered animal, insects, outer space, really anything. Grab a notebook and pen. Jot, draw, observe and/or talk about it to build interest and intrigue!

Then head outside to observe or find a website that gives you a window into the world outside your home.

2 ASK YOURSELF: WHAT DO I THINK I KNOW ABOUT THIS?

Kids draw and jot what they already know about a topic. They can write and draw it in a notebook, on post-it notes, or on a paper. Anything that lets them record their learning and questions.

Here is an example of Brad’s class observing insects with photos that he is taking with his cell phone and sharing. A website or a book works, too! Give kids time and space to talk about, write, and draw what they observe.

These field notes were written as a child observed several birds via a webcam. She responds to her observations with questions and inferences, just as scientists do.
3 **Time to Learn Something New**

Kids read, listen, and view—with a magazine article, a video, photographs, a book, a website, or a real-life experience like this webcam that Brad’s students used to observe birds. There are endless possibilities!

**DOWNLOAD A FREE LESSON! MERGE THINKING WITH NEW INFORMATION.**

4 **Time to Wonder**

As kids jot or draw new learning, they will have a lot of questions! Let them know that their questions are the most important questions. “How” and “Why” questions encourage kids to dig deeper. Have them explore “What do I wonder about ________?”

![Child's drawing](image)

This child describes what happens when sea turtles get caught in fishing nets, or are hunted for their shells or meat. She is intent on saving sea turtles and wonders: How can we help them?

**DOWNLOAD A FREE LESSON! VIEW AND READ TO LEARN AND WONDER.**

5 **Find Some Answers**

Kids collect their learning in a notebook, on post-it notes, or on a paper. They read, view, and listen to answer their own questions.

**DOWNLOAD A FREE LESSON! READ TO FIND ANSWERS.**
Notice how I think about what I think I already know. I’ll record my background knowledge on this Post-it and put it up on our chart. But as we watched that video about , I was thinking the information I was hearing is different from what I already knew. I had what we call a misconception. A misconception is something we think we know, but it actually turns out that our information isn’t accurate. I thought (share misconception) but now I’m thinking about the more accurate information I just read. I’ll cross out what I used to think and put the new information I just learned on a Post-it.

**Share Your Learning**

Once kids have recorded their new learning and found answers to some of their questions, there are a zillion ways to share it.

**CURIOSITY IN ACTION**

**HERE ARE A FEW IDEAS, BUT THE SKY’S THE LIMIT!**

- Build with Lego or blocks or create a museum display.

- Write and draw a picture book. Staple a few blank pages together to create a picture book that kids draw and write themselves.

- Make a poster! A big piece of paper or a piece of cardboard encourages kids to write about and illustrate their new learning.

**DOWNLOAD A FREE LESSON! SUMMARIZE AND SYNTHESIZE INFORMATION.**