

Refining Problems and Forming Research Groups

By this point each student should have completed the first phase of the research cycle—identifying an initial problem for research. The next step is for students to discuss one another’s proposed problems, which will lead to the creation of research groups that work on selected problems.

Conduct an open discussion of students’ research problems.

- Have students present their proposed problems, along with the reasons for their choices.
- Remind students that a good problem adds to their group’s understanding of the explorable concepts. Discourage problems that are either too broad or too specific.
- Emphasize the importance of building group knowledge of ancient civilizations. This will help set a clear purpose for the students’ research.

Help students identify relationships between problems.

- Write problems on the board as students present them.
- Point out similarities and relationships between problems by drawing arrows to link related problems.
- List all related problems together.

Form research groups, with each group working on a related set of problems or questions, and provide time for groups to meet.

- Assign groups in the way that works best for your class—by self-selection, by assignment on the basis of common interests, or by some combination of methods.
- Explain steps the groups should carry out during Workshop. Tell groups to agree on a precise statement of their research problem, the nature of their expected research contributions, and lists of related questions that may help later in assigning individual roles. Students should record this information on page 22 of the *Inquiry Journal*.

Provide time during the week for students to begin research.



Teacher Tip INVESTIGATION

ACTIVITIES Remind students that a good problem cannot be answered by examining one

encyclopedia entry. Explain that the goal of research is not to reproduce information but to answer genuine questions and build group understanding.



Formal Assessment

Use the Research Rubrics on page 136J to assess students’ ability to formulate research questions and problems.

Name _____	Date _____
UNIT 2 Ancient Civilizations	
Investigating the Group's Problem	
My group's problem: Answers will vary.	

What our research will contribute to the rest of the class: Answers will vary.	

Some other questions about this problem: Answers will vary.	

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Investigating the Group's Problem • Inquiry Journal	

Inquiry Journal p. 22