# HOW TO ORGANIZE INDEPENDENT PROJECT WORKS AT ENGLISH COURSE
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**Abstract:** *the article considers the issue how to start working on projects at English course High school and make them various. The article describes the problems which students and teachers face at the beginning and during research work, provides evidence from teachers' action research and analysis of obtained data from students' questionnaire. On the basis of teaching practice the authors describe the steps which should be made before starting research work and give examples of research questions formulation. The focus is made on the development of the research skills and how they can be combined at interdisciplinary levels. Based on the comparison of data for two years, the benefits of a correct start arrangement for project works are given.*
**Keywords:** *projects, research questions, 6 lenses, perspectives, sources, research work, independent, formulate, analysis, recommendation.*

# КАК ОРГАНИЗОВАТЬ САМОСТОЯТЕЛЬНУЮ ПРОЕКТНУЮ РАБОТУ НА УРОКАХ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА
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**Аннотация:** *в статье рассматривается вопрос о том, как начать работу над проектами в курсе английского языка старшей школы и сделать их разнообразными. В статье описываются проблемы, с которыми сталкиваются учащиеся и преподаватели в начале и в ходе исследовательской работы, приводятся данные исследований учителей и анализ данных, полученных из анкет учащихся. На основе педагогической практики авторы описывают шаги, которые необходимо выполнить перед началом исследовательской работы, и приводят примеры постановки исследовательских вопросов. Акцент делается на развитие исследовательских навыков и то, как они могут быть объединены на междисциплинарных уровнях. На основе сопоставления данных за два года даны преимущества правильной организации начала проектных работ.*
**Ключевые слова:** *проекты, исследовательские вопросы, 6 линз, перспективы, источники, исследовательская работа, самостоятельная, формулировка, анализ, рекомендация.*

A renew curriculum for English language High school in Nazarbaev Intellectual Schools (NIS), which is constructed by Cambridge, includes independent project works making in each term. It means that at the end of the course every student should have and practice research skills of the conforming level. This type of skills are developed by special Global Perspectives and Project Work (GPPW) course – a new course for our students which is aimed on the elaboration of critical thinking tools and students' research skills. But the problem was that our students distinguished these subjects like two separate ones and did not use obtained GPPW research skills during English course. Thereby their project works looked like reports decorated with bright pictures and contained 'copy-past' information.

To solve the problem of 'fake' project works the need to establish common instructions, requests and tips for projects was identified. If students had had a special guidance for any project works, they would have easily applied their research skills to different areas of education and practiced their life-long learning. "Making projects is a dynamic approach to teaching in which students explore real-world problems and challenges… With this type of active and engaged learning, students are inspired to obtain a deeper knowledge of the subjects they're studying." [1] Hence, a common approach to a projects arrangement gives profits not only in the frames of two mentioned subjects but leads to the development of the research skills at interdisciplinary level.

The structured interviews with High school teachers presented that organizing a project work they have a clear picture about the following notions: actuality, creativity, degrees of disclosure, effectiveness of the methods, oratory and the quality of presentation. However, a scientific approach and independence of

implementation are still challenging as for teachers as for students. It happens because usually a teacher is an initiator of the project work and topics, suggested by teachers, are limited by the school curriculum. That is why determining a topic and a research question by students is an essential start of project work.

The easiest way to start a project is suggested by a school curriculum: give a topic and a list of resources. Lesson observation demonstrates that this approach is not effective as students can find the information independently and this found data will be even more various than a teacher can suggest. As a result students' works are like twins: the same topic, the same content, only visuals are different if they follow a teacher's way. Students are not interested in works of their peers as they are familiar with the same information.

To consider the topics from different perspectives is more beneficial and provide the variety of research directions. We started to implement the idea of different perspectives into our English lessons as well as GPPW. Students had to consider different issues from personal, local and global perspectives. For example, the theme "Artificial intelligence" in Grade 11 was started with the benefits of artificial intelligence for learners. Learners expressed their vision of AI in their social and personal life taking into consideration benefits and drawbacks. Then they considered the issue at national level providing relevant examples of positive and negative consequences for our country. Finally students were suggested that they learnt the topic at a global level: participation of different countries in AI development.

All three stages were conducted under the questions "How?" and "Why?" As a result, students were not limited with the frames only English and GPPW subjects: they had consultations with local and international IT and Robotics teachers who are working at our school, some ideas which appeared at English lessons were tested at Robotics lessons. As the full name of our school is Nazarbayev Intellectual School of Physics and Mathematical Direction Taldykorgan, all our students are gifted and talented in Technical science and familiar with STEM projects. Working on English projects with consideration of three perspectives helped our students to do theoretical research for their STEM projects as well.

To provide the variety of research directions and to widen students' outlook we suggested that our students searched the materials for their research looking at the topics through 6 GPPW lenses [2]: ethics, politics, environment, culture, science and technology, economics. Learners had to choose at least three lenses and investigate the topic in those spheres. They could collect background materials for further empirical research independently and in accordance with their interests. It led to the creation of sub-topics: "The impact of modern devices on agriculture in Almaty region last five years", "How AI can replace teachers in education", "AI implementation into Kazakh culture: risks and consequences", etc. Thus, the lenses helped our students to vary the content of their research.

The results of the questionnaire which was held with Grade 11 students presented students' understanding of following ideas:

- three different perspectives (personal, local and global) make learn the topic deeper to state a personal attitude to the issue, identify the country position and know more about another countries
- the variety of lenses combinations allows to search the topic in accordance with different students' interests
- learners do not like to work with given sources – to find sources independently is more intriguing and there is no 'must do' deals which are usually made forcibly
- background information is necessary to define the area of investigation and start research work

After consideration of the topic through three perspectives and six lenses we started a preparatory work for formulating a research question. From interviews with our local teachers we identified that teachers misunderstood the importance of the research questions. The most part thought that research questions were necessary only at the beginning of the research work to identify the area of investigation and formulate a thesis statement. However, all of them faced a problem that stating the aims and writing a conclusion part is challenging for students. Therefore, we turned back to the beginning – how to make a research question.

It should be noted that research questions are formulated after preliminary work. Students should identify the areas of their interests, search some relevant sources or have interviews with specialists in the chosen spheres and then they can start formulating research questions. There is a plenty of different questions and techniques how to assess the research question but how to start formulating them should be explained in details.

Students grasp easily that research questions cannot be general, alternative or tag-questions. That is why they are recommended to start playing with a special type of questions using the active words suggested by Brooklyn Connections [3]: cause/effect/impact/change/influence. At the same time, research questions should not be too specific but they should be limited by time and place. Another way students would use out-of-date sources or geography of the research would be too vast. The following examples demonstrate how our students improved their research questions on the topic "Perception of the society" at the lessons of English:

How does smoking industry affect teenagers in the modern society?

How have teenagers been affected by smoking industry advertising from 2000?

How does feminism influence Kazakhstan society in frames of science, culture and environment?

How does feminism influence international development of Kazakhstan last 5 years?

| What are the consequences of Instagram influence on consumers' behavior? | How has consumer's behavior been changed with the rise of Instagram? |

Simple answers these research questions formulate a thesis statement which is studied through the research. The aims are set in the frames of the research question as the topic and main ideas are clearly seen. For instance, "How have teenagers been affected by smoking industry advertising from 2000?" – main ideas are growth and availability of tobacco advertising, teens' exposure to advertising, economical benefits for smoking industry, inner policy of the country toward the issue. The aims could be written in the form of statements or sub-questions based the main ideas. Conclusions are made in accordance with the aims when students support or refuse the statements, answer the sub-questions.

Therefore, a correct start of research work provides the following benefits as for students as for teachers:

- Students develop their research skills transferring knowledge through several subjects.
- A common approach on the basis of different perspectives and six lenses to project requirements supports active learning, provides scientific meaning and gives independence of the research.
- If students consider the topic from different perspectives, they learn the issue deeper and evaluate its benefits and drawbacks.
- Use of different lenses allows to combine several subjects in one project and provides the variety of searched areas.
- A research question, formulated correctly, helps to arrange the content of the project, put aims and make conclusions in accordance with the aims.

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