

# 6 Information Skills Survey

The information skills survey asked students about their strategies for, involvement in, and enjoyment of information-gathering activities. The questions were the same for year 4 and year 8 students. The survey was administered to the students in an independent-tasks session (four students working individually on tasks, supported by a teacher). The questions were read to year 4 students and also to individual year 8 students who requested this help.

The survey included eight questions which invited students to record a rating response by circling their choice and two questions which invited students to tick up to three options from a list (including an "other" option where students could describe an additional response).

One item asked students to indicate where they usually go when trying to find information. They could tick up to three options. Their responses are shown here, in order of popularity for year 4 students, with 2001 percentages for comparison.



WHERE STUDENTS USUALLY FIND INFORMATION		year 4 2005 ('01)	year 8 2005 ('01)
Source:	internet	61 (47)	88 (72)
	library	46 (51)	53 (57)
	parent	45 (45)	43 (45)
	books at home	37 (41)	30 (38)
	town library	22 (22)	22 (27)
	teacher	25 (19)	14 (10)
	friend	17 (17)	12 (12)
	CD-ROM	7 (15)	6 (24)
	other (written in)	6 (3)	4 (2)

For both year 4 and year 8 students, the internet was the most popular source by a substantial margin. This represented a significant increase in popularity over the past four years. Next most popular were the library (probably the school library, given that the town library was listed separately) and parents.

Another item asked students to indicate what they do when they can't find information they need. They could tick up to three options. Their responses are shown here, in order of popularity for year 4 students, with 2001 and 1997 percentages for comparison.







WHEN STUDENTS CAN'T FIND INFORMATION		year 4 2005 ('01) ['97]	year 8 2005 ('01) ['97]
Strategy:	keep looking	71 (67) [67]	58 (64) [54]
	ask a parent	54 (55) [45]	58 (64) [54]
	ask the teacher	40 (43) [47]	52 (51) [49]
	ask a friend	36 (34) [35]	31 (38) [31]
	ask a librarian	40 (33) [35]	41 (38) [50]
	give up	8 (7) [9]	11 (10) [8]
	other (written in)	6 (2) [5]	7 (7) [2]





Compared to year 4 students, year 8 students placed less emphasis on keeping looking themselves, and more emphasis on asking their teacher. There has been little change in the responses over the eight years since the first survey in 1997.

The remaining eight items used a rating format. The percentages of students choosing each response to these five questions are shown in the two tables opposite. Where available, 2001 and 1997 percentages are shown for comparative purposes.

### YEAR 4 INFORMATION SKILLS SURVEY 2005 (2001) [1997]

	<i>heaps</i>	<i>quite a lot</i>	<i>sometimes</i>	<i>never</i>
1. How often do you have to find information for a study (research topic/project)?	14 (13) [13]	31 (32) [33]	50 (52) [53]	5 (3) [1]
2. How often do you have a really interesting study for which you have to find information?	15 (12) [14]	29 (31) [27]	47 (51) [51]	9 (6) [8]
3. How often do you look for information because you want to, not because you've been told to?	17 (17) [15]	20 (22) [23]	43 (45) [45]	20 (16) [17]
4. How often have you used a library catalogue?	17	24	37	22
				
5. How much do you like hunting for information?	39 (42) [38]	37 (34) [38]	15 (15) [14]	9 (9) [10]
6. How good do you think you are at hunting for information?	32 (33)	42 (43)	19 (17)	7 (7)
7. How much do you like sharing with others the information you find?	50 (51)	27 (25)	13 (15)	10 (9)
8. How much do you like writing down what you find out?	42 (43) [41]	28 (25) [32]	15 (19) [14]	15 (13) [13]

### YEAR 8 INFORMATION SKILLS SURVEY 2005 (2001) [1997]

	<i>heaps</i>	<i>quite a lot</i>	<i>sometimes</i>	<i>never</i>
1. How often do you have to find information for a study (research topic/project)?	15 (18) [18]	48 (47) [52]	37 (34) [29]	0 (1) [1]
2. How often do you have a really interesting study for which you have to find information?	6 (7) [8]	25 (28) [27]	64 (61) [61]	5 (4) [4]
3. How often do you look for information because you want to, not because you've been told to?	5 (8) [9]	18 (19) [19]	60 (58) [60]	17 (15) [12]
4. How often have you used a library catalogue?	11	31	44	14
				
5. How much do you like hunting for information?	12 (17) [18]	48 (51) [51]	33 (25) [24]	7 (7) [7]
6. How good do you think you are at hunting for information?	18 (23)	52 (52)	22 (20)	8 (5)
7. How much do you like sharing with others the information you find?	31 (37)	42 (41)	20 (17)	7 (5)
8. How much do you like writing down what you find out?	16 (23) [16]	34 (37) [35]	32 (24) [34]	18 (16) [15]

A substantially greater proportion of year 8 than year 4 students reported that they had to find information for a project or topic heaps or quite a lot (question 1). Perhaps as a consequence of being given such tasks more frequently, year 8 students were much less inclined than year 4 students to be enthusiastic about hunting for information (question 5) and about writing down the information

they found (question 8). While year 4 students responded similarly to questions 1 and 2, the pattern was quite different for year 8 students, suggesting that many of the information-finding projects which year 8 students were asked to attempt were not viewed as "really interesting". About 75 percent of students are quite happy to share with others the information they have

found (question 7). Where comparisons with 2001 and 1997 responses are possible, the results in 2005 are very similar to the results of the earlier surveys, so the same conclusions apply.

