

BASIC FEATURES OF A STUDENT PROJECT

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Student projects are carried out either to fulfil an examination requirement or when it forms a part of a subject syllabus or when given as a assignment by the teacher. Whatever the purpose, certain criteria have to be fulfilled by a student project. It is important that the student has a clear understanding of these criteria before he or she embarks on a project. The important criteria that characterises most types of student projects are outlined below.

1. A project is carried out to find out (or to gather) specific information about an activity (process), an event, a place, about our surroundings, about an individual or groups of individuals (animal, plant or person) etc. This forms the aim(s) of the project. The

Title of the project is based on this broad aim and is worded in such a way to give an idea of what the project is about.

2. Once you have decided on a project you may have a preconceived idea of the end result of the project. Such preconceived ideas come from reading books, by talking to people or even by intelligent guessing. This allows you to find out what information is already available on the subject. This aspect is emphasised in the **Introduction** to the project. In the Introduction you should justify (or give reasons for) what you are going to do.

3. From the start one must be quite clear about what specific information is to be found out by doing the project. This forms the **Objective(s)** (set of questions) of the project. The objectives have to be simple and achievable within the specified time and with the available resources. Once the objectives are known, how you set about finding the information to fulfil these objectives (find answers to the questions) has to be worked out. This becomes the **Method(s)** of your project.
4. The method would involve stepwise listing of the procedure that you hope to follow. Resources that are needed to carry out the work form the **Materials**. Thus, the section on "**Materials and Methods**" of the project comes into form. By now you are aware of what things are needed to carry out the work and how you would carry out the work in order to achieve the objectives. If the methodology involves animals, plants and people it is necessary to ensure that the method is ethical, socially acceptable, and environmentally friendly and is within the law of the country.
5. The work that need to be carried out most often take the form of either (a) collecting information (b) studying the distribution (c) making counts (d) making measurements of either time/size (height)/space (length and breadth) (e) sorting, grading or grouping (put into pre decided groups) or even making regular observations. This activity is referred to as gathering **Data**. The data collected has to be entered in a proper book (data book) and not on scraps of paper. Data has to be gathered as correctly and precisely as possible. Therefore, all the necessary details have to be obtained by discussing with parents, teachers or seniors, prior to the start of a project.
6. The data or the information gathered has to be then presented in a form that can be easily understood. Use of either (i) Charts, (ii) Tables (iii) Drawings of sketches (iv) Graphs (v) Histograms forms an important part of a project report and project presentation.
7. The data (information) gathered becomes the **Results** of your study.
8. So, the results (information) you obtained by carrying out the project then needs to be discussed to see whether you have achieved the objectives listed at the beginning of the project. The **Discussion** therefore becomes the most important and interesting part of a project. This section also brings together all aspects of the project in the light of prior information. It also includes any shortcomings and problems encountered when carrying out the project. Any speculations and improvements you would like to make in the light of your findings also become an important part of the discussion.
9. Finally one must end by stating very briefly the important **Conclusions** or findings of your project.
10. The final outcome of the project is the writing of the **Project Report** on which your work would be assessed and marked. This has to be done carefully, paying attention to the proper use of

words and tense (Methodology needs to be written in the past tense) and has to be correctly and neatly presented. Although there is no specific format for writing the report, specific information has to come in a project. This information is best given under the bold, subtitles that appear in this article.

of this information under the authors' surname forms the **References**.

11. The books and other periodicals or articles from which information was collected have to be duly acknowledged. The alphabetical listing

12. All those people who helped you in various ways have to be thanked and this forms the **Acknowledgement**.
13. A well planned and correctly carried out project that has been written up well becomes a useful document not only to you but to all others who read it after you.



Figure 2: Students at Vidyakara Vidyalaya, Maharagama collecting garbage under the work of a project