



# Where to Begin?

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# Consider an article on athletic shoes...

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- How might we move forward from an article on athletic shoes to collect new or additional data about these shoes. Questions to consider:
  - How do gender, age and other variables affect buying habits?
  - Do consumers purchase wisely?
  - How accurate are manufactures' claims about their shoes?
  - How much do advertisements affect purchasers' choices?
  - How much do athletes and coaches at school know about which shoes are right for which sports and which feet?
  - Has the proliferation of specialized shoes positively affected injury levels of athletes over time?
  - Who knows more about athletic shoes: coaches, orthopedists, physical therapists, athletic trainers, or shoe salespersons?
  - How has the development of new technologies and materials affected shoe manufacturing?
  - Does the price of an athletic shoe determine its effectiveness?



# How could we find answers to these questions?

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- By...
  - interviewing (in person, by phone, or by email),
  - designing and distributing questionnaires,
  - analyzing survey data,
  - contacting manufacturers for further information and their market research data, etc.
- Determine which techniques would be most appropriate to answer which questions.
  - Exactly who should be interviewed? Surveyed? Contacted by mail, email, or phone?



# Other Factors to Consider

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- List any audience who could benefit from the result:
  - School athletes, coaches, salespersons, manufacturers, etc.
- What format should be used to communicate the research results?
  - Multi-page publication, video, web page, lecture, etc.



# Other Factors to Consider

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- Once you decide how you want to communicate the information, do you have the skills, or do you need to acquire them?
  - Multimedia, web-design, etc.
- What are the logistical considerations?
  - Postage costs, booking a date/site, etc.
- What instrument could you design to get feedback?
  - What constitutes excellence?



# What does this mean for you?

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- Find an article in a general readership newspaper or magazine. Good ones might include *Time*, *Newsweek*, *U.S. News and World Report*, the *Baltimore Sun*, the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, *Popular Science*, *Baltimore Magazine*, the *Washingtonian*, or the *Business Monthly*. If you already have a very specific interest such as computer programming, chemical engineering, or elementary education, you may want to locate and bring in some more specialized journals that cover recent advances in your area of interest.
- Think about the questions raised, what isn't discussed, what you could do to fill in the gaps, who might be interested in your findings, and the format in which you could convey your results.



# The Assignment

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1. Summarize your article in a few sentences.
2. What questions does this article raise?
3. What resources could you consult to find answers to these questions?
4. If you wanted to create a project to answer these questions, how might you collect data (consider observations, interviews, surveys, etc.)?
5. What accessible audience might be interested in learning about your findings? Why?
6. How could you best communicate the results (i.e., presentation, fundraiser, etc.)? Why would you choose that medium?
7. How could you evaluate your success?