**Chapter 3: Research Skills & Using English Sources**

***Summary***

**Reading Summary:**  
Good research involves finding reliable sources, especially in English. Students should paraphrase, summarise, and reference adequately. Wikipedia is useful for background but not for quoting.

**Key Skills:**

* Finding trustworthy sources
* Paraphrasing and summarising
* Referencing

**Mini Task:**  
Find one English article about a Dutch business and summarise it in 3 sentences.

***Classwork***

**Introduction**

In BTEC, research isn’t just about Googling random facts—it’s about finding **reliable, relevant, and well-sourced information** to support your assignments. Whether you are writing about a Dutch business, evaluating a marketing strategy, or comparing customer service models, your ideas need evidence.

In this chapter, we’ll explore how to research effectively, how to use English-language sources, and how to summarise and reference what you find.

A person using a microscope

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**Why Research Matters in BTEC**

Unlike traditional subjects that rely on memorisation, BTEC assignments ask you to **apply knowledge** to real-world scenarios. That means you need to back up your ideas with facts, examples, and expert opinions.

Good research helps you:

* Build stronger arguments
* Meet higher grading criteria (Merit and Distinction)
* Avoid vague or unsupported claims
* Show professionalism and academic integrity

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**What Makes a Source Reliable?**

Not all websites are created equal. In BTEC, you should aim to use **academic and professional sources**. Here’s how to spot a good one:

| **Reliable Source ✅** | **Unreliable Source ❌** |
| --- | --- |
| Government websites (e.g. rijksoverheid.nl) | Personal blogs or opinion pieces |
| Company reports and press releases | Unverified social media posts |
| News articles from trusted outlets | Clickbait or sensational headlines |
| Academic journals and databases | Wikipedia (for quoting) |

**Tip:** Wikipedia is fine for background reading, but do not quote it directly. Instead, follow the references at the bottom of the page to find original sources.

**Using English-Language Sources**

Even though you are studying in the Netherlands, many high-quality sources—especially in business, media, and technology—are published in English. Using English sources helps you:

* Access global perspectives
* Improve your academic vocabulary
* Prepare for international study or work

**Example:**  
If you are researching Heineken’s global marketing strategy, you will find more detailed insights on English-language business sites than on Dutch-only platforms.

**How to Paraphrase and Summarise**

When you find a helpful source, do not just copy it—**paraphrase** or **summarise** it.

* **Paraphrasing** means rewriting the idea in your own words.  
  Example:  
  Original: “Heineken uses social media to engage younger audiences.”  
  Paraphrased: “The company targets younger consumers by interacting with them on platforms like Instagram and TikTok.”
* **Summarising** means shortening the content to its key points.  
  Example:  
  “Heineken’s strategy focuses on digital engagement, brand storytelling, and youth appeal.”

**Why it matters:**  
Paraphrasing shows understanding. Summarising shows clarity. Both help you avoid plagiarism.

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**Referencing Your Sources**

In BTEC, you must give credit to the sources you use. This is called **referencing**, and it’s essential for academic honesty.

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**Harvard Referencing Format:**

**In-text citation:**  
(Smith, 2022) or (Heineken, 2023)

**Reference list entry:**  
Smith, J. (2022). *Marketing Strategies in Europe*. Business Weekly.  
Heineken. (2023). *Annual Report*. Retrieved from [www.heineken.com](http://www.heineken.com)

**Tip:** Keep a list of every source you use while researching—it’ll save time later.

**USE THE LINK BELOW TO DO IT EASILY FOR FREE!**

<https://www.mybib.com/tools/harvard-referencing-generator>

**Real-Life Scenario**

Imagine you are writing a BTEC assignment on Dutch snack companies. You want to compare Tony’s Chocolonely and Lay’s.

A weak approach:  
“I think Tony’s is better because it’s more ethical.”

A strong approach:  
“Tony’s Chocolonely focuses on fair trade and transparency, as shown in their 2023 impact report (Tony’s Chocolonely, 2023). Lay’s, owned by PepsiCo, emphasises mass production and global reach (PepsiCo, 2022).”

See the difference? The second version uses research, paraphrasing, and referencing.

**Reflection Questions**

* Where do you usually find information for school assignments?
* Have you ever used a source without referencing it?
* What is one English-language website you trust for business or media content?
* How confident are you in paraphrasing and summarising?

***Homework & Reading Tasks***

**Homework Task - (Show this to your Teacher):**  
Find one **English-language article** about a Dutch business (e.g. Philips, Heineken, Shell). Then:

1. Write a **3-sentence summary** of the article in your own words.
2. Include an **in-text citation** and a **Harvard-style reference list entry**.

Example:  
**Summary:**  
Tony’s Chocolonely aims to make 100% slave-free chocolate by focusing on ethical sourcing and transparency. Their 2023 report highlights progress in supply chain reform. The company also uses bold packaging to attract younger consumers.

**Citation:**  
(Tony’s Chocolonely, 2023)

**Reference List:**  
Tony’s Chocolonely. (2023). *Annual Impact Report*. Retrieved from [www.tonyschocolonely.com](http://www.tonyschocolonely.com)