KWHL
TABLES

▶ **KWHL Tables are widely used graphic organizers that help you plan information seeking strategies and organize results. They are easy to use and broadly applicable, appropriate for both your professional queries and your kid's first big homework assignment.**

Use KWHL tables to organize your assumptions and kick-start your research plan. The KWHL process forces participants to rapidly identify what they do—and do not—know. This structured approach to early ideation sessions can be done individually, with a creative team, or even collaboratively with clients and stakeholders. The basic steps are outlined here:

K: What do I know?
This step asks you to outline your understanding of facts and information related to the project/audience/message. It also encourages you to list some of those assumptions you've just generated, what you think you know about those same subjects areas. It's a good idea to visually differentiate proven fact from assumption for clarity. If assessing multiple categories, such as project/audience/message, it may be helpful to build individual KWHL tables for each, or create a more complex master chart. (Hooray grids and color coding!)

W: What do I need to find out?
Groups of people working together are often more successful completing this step. Conversation around this question tends to generate more insights and queries than one person would working alone. Here it's your job to fill in the gaps between what you know for certain, and where you're less sure and have questions. What do you need to investigate and uncover in order to make the project a success?

H: How will I find the information I need?
Time to connect research methods to questions, and hand out assignments if you're working with a team. Be mindful of how much time you have to devote to this exercise and plan information seeking strategies that will deliver the most accurate, detailed information in the most efficient manner. For example, it's easy to turn to Internet searches, but equally easy to find false information or fall down digital rabbit holes of distraction. Perhaps interviewing people is a faster path to provide some perspective?

L: What have I learned?

After conducting preliminary research to investigate assumptions and questions, complete the chart, recording what you've learned. Add a meeting with the team, if you're working collectively, and discuss the group's discoveries. Don't forget to keep your sources well documented for future reference. Findings will either confirm assumptions and answer questions, or raise new areas of investigation.

Use this tool at the beginning of the research process. It's useful for taking inventory of a new commission and crafting a more precise research plan. While KWHL tables are intended as a formative tool, the content assembled could be used as part of later reporting. Work smarter, not harder. Look for overlaps!

KWHL **TABLE**

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Creating KWHL tables can help you develop a research plan. The exercise will identify holes in your understanding of the subject being studied, forcing the research team to develop strategies to find the missing information. Use this technique to kick off your research and work through early project assumptions.

What do I **know**?

What do I need to find out?

How will I find the information I need?

What have I **learned**?