Identifying Information Needs (Sample Answers)

Identify Key Words. Key words provide clues to the scope and focus of the question. Read over the research question carefully and circle what you think are significant words or phrases that are necessary to answering the question: **Digital technology** influences how we gain **access to information** and how we **communicate** with other people. In the **21st century**, what **skills** will be essential?	

Explanation of Key Words and Phrases	
Digital Technology • **Access to Information** • **How to Communicate**	Provides the context of the question. Because of the prevalence of digital technology, we need to think about what new skills we need. So the scope of the essay is set by these ideas of accessing information and communicating effectively. We need to ask: • What do we mean by digital technology? • How does it change our access to information? • How does it affect how we communicate? The answers to these questions will help us understand what new skills we need so that we can access information and communicate effectively.
21st Century Skills	We are looking for discussion and arguments that define what the new 21st Century skills might be. We will summarize these different positions in the essay and add in our own views. We want to look for: • Any debates over these skills. For example, Prensky and Wohlsen differ in what they argue are essential skills. • Different skills associated with different perspectives and fields of study. Do computer science and technology writers identify different skills than educators or people in the social sciences?

Your own ideas and reactions to the research question can help you to focus. In the box below, reflect on your own answer to the question. What do you think? You can use this to measure and compare against the research material you find.   **What do you think about the research question? How would you answer it?**
Answers will vary.

Based on the information explaining the key words and phrases, make a list of specific information that we need to research. Sometimes it's helpful to list this as smaller, more specific questions that need to be answered.

List of Information needs

- How do we define digital technology? Examples?

- How does it affect our access to information? Is there debate about this?

- How does digital technology affect the way we communicate? Is there debate about this?

- What are the essential 21st century skills needed to ensure we can succeed in a world shaped by digital technology? Is there debate about this?

- Do different fields of study have different views about what skills are necessary?

- What skills will be necessary to ensure we can manage all the information that we have access to as a result of digital technology?

- What skills will be necessary to ensure we can communicate effectively using digital technology?

We can use these questions to guide our research. Finding answers to all these questions will ensure we what we need to answer the research question.