

Independent Studies



Independent Study is a research project where students learn how to develop the skills for independent learning. The degree of help and structure will vary between students and depend on their ability to manage ideas, time and productivity. A modification of the independent study is the buddy-study. A *buddy-study* permits two or three students to work together on a project. The expectation is that all may share the research and analysis/organization of information but each student must complete an individual product to demonstrate learning that has taken place and be accountable for their own planning, time management, and individual accomplishment. *Orbitals* are a type of independent study.

The student and teacher identify topics of interest to the student. Together they plan a method of investigating the topic and decide upon the outcome of the independent study. The result of the project will be based on the needs of the student and the curricular content. Guided by the teacher and structured by timelines, process logs and/or journals, the student documents the process and completes his or her own research on the topic and develops a product to share with classmates.

For example, in a unit on ocean life, a student indicates that she wants to learn more about sharks. With the teacher's guidance she develops research questions, collects information, and presents an oral report to the class about the feeding patterns of great white sharks.