

Activity - Break Down Your Project

Instructions

1. Identify 1-2 small units

Think about your current research idea (or a topic you're exploring).

Ask yourself:

- If I could only work on *one small* piece of this project next, what would it be?
- What could I reasonably complete in a few weeks, not months?

Write down 1–2 candidate research units.

2. Answer Two Key Questions for Each Unit

For each unit, answer the following:

1. What question does this unit answer?
 - This should be specific and focused.
 - Avoid “understand everything” or “improve performance overall.”
2. What deliverable demonstrates success?
 - What would you point to and say, “This part is done”?

Example:

Big Idea: Understanding fatigue behavior in composite aircraft wings.

Research Unit 1:

- **Question:**
How does variable load cycling affect crack initiation in a specific composite layup?
- **Deliverable:**
One fatigue-life plot comparing constant vs. variable loading for a single specimen type

Research Unit 2:

- **Question:**
How well does an existing fatigue model predict observed damage for this layup?
- **Deliverable:**
Error comparison between model predictions and experimental data

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