Introduction

First paragraph:
• What is your PIP about and why did you choose the area of enquiry?

Second paragraph:
• What is your central hypothesis? ie what are you setting out to prove via this research?

Third paragraph:
• What methodologies have you employed in this research and why?
• Justify your selection of research tools - what are their advantages and why are they best suited to your research topic?

Fourth paragraph:
• Explain how your PIP investigation will address the cross cultural component
• Remember to explain how this cross-cultural perspective will allow you (the researcher), to empathise with the “other”
• Also remember to explain how this cross cultural study presents you with a view that is beyond your normal realm of experience.

Fifth paragraph:
• This paragraph should allow you to round off the introduction.
• It should also explain how this PIP “journey” will enhance both your investigative skills and your socio-cultural literacy

Central Material (CM)
1. Create around six (more if that is appropriate to your topic) focus questions that you would like your hypothesis / research to answer. Use these as major headings or chapter titles throughout the CM
2. Go through the syllabus systematically and select all of the relevant course themes that relate to your PIP. Ensure that you “weave” these into the sentences and paragraphs that eventually make up your CM – remember that your PIP should “read” like Society and Culture!
3. Always try to blend (synthesise) both primary and secondary data throughout each section of your CM. Where possible, try to support your primary findings with the work of other researchers (secondary sources). Synthesis is the hallmark of a band 5/6 student!
4. Ensure that you source all information via footnote (even if it is from your research). Source all of your primary research to your appendix items (include the exact appendix page number via your footnote)
5. Place all quotes from questionnaires / focus groups / interviews etc in italics and source them.
6. Do not insert photos, graphs or diagrams unless you intend explaining and analysing them. (Otherwise place these into the appendix and simply refer to them via footnote)
7. When you quote your statistical findings in the CM, always try to explain what social and cultural forces were at work to produce that data. Remember, the examiner is looking to see if you
are attempting to analyse (making a judgment) this data.

8. If you attempt to “analyse” your findings throughout the PIP, your mark starts to trend upwards into the Band 5 range (ie 19–24 marks). If you simply “describe” your findings, your mark will never move out of the Band 3 mark range (ie 13–18 marks) because of its descriptive nature.

9. Always have a copy of the HSC PIP marking guidelines beside you as you write the CM. Focus specifically on the 25–30 (Band 6) mark range. There are no secrets to the marking process. If you adhere to these guidelines, you should score in that mark range. (assuming of course, that you express yourself clearly, concisely and utilise the relevant course themes and concepts).

10. Always show your work to your teacher to obtain constructive feedback. It’s also a good idea to get others to read your work (Mum, Dad & friends). They will pick up spelling errors, poor grammar etc and will also provide a litmus test for how clearly you have expressed your ideas.

11. Be prepared to rework your CM many times. Every sentence and paragraph should be crafted to ensure that it delivers a powerful socio-cultural message.

12. As you write, constantly ask yourself, “Is this section I’m writing helping me to prove my hypothesis?” If the answer is no, then what you are writing is just meaningless padding. It helps you to meet the word limit, but does nothing for your research.

13. Also try to ensure that you carefully craft the concluding sentences of each sub-heading so that it “leads” into the next section of your PIP. By doing this, you create a smooth flow of thoughts and ideas throughout the entire PIP response. Remember, its all about continuity and integration!

14. Always be on the look out for information pertaining to your PIP topic. Read the newspaper every day. Place them on your favourites file re your home computer; visit the school library; browse quality book shops; check out amazon.com for book titles; read the weekly TV guides; watch and listen to the ABC; regularly check the ABC web site (especially ABC On-line). In short become even more socially literate!

15. Do not, under any circumstances, attempt to plagiarise information. Various internet searches are undertaken as a matter of course at the Marking Centre. This is especially true of work that reads/sounds as though it were produced from an academic source.

16. Finally, immerse yourself in your research. Enjoy the process, become expert, and grow as a person!

**Writing a PIP Conclusion**

*First paragraph:*

What did you learn as a consequence of your chosen social investigation?

*Second paragraph:*

Did your research prove the hypothesis that you established for your inquiry? If not, why not?

*Third paragraph:*

How effective were your research tools? How appropriate were they with the advantage of hindsight? Did they work? Why?

*Fourth paragraph:*

If you were to undertake this research again, what changes would you make to both your methodology and process? Why?

*Fifth paragraph:*

How has this research enhanced your social literacy? How have you grown as an individual and researcher because of the PIP experience?
Choosing Your PIP Topic

The following exercises will help you to choose and refine a suitable PIP topic as well as develop appropriate research questions and methodologies.

Remember, to be successful at this exercise, you must carefully work your way through the set questions and guidelines in an honest manner. Don’t fool yourself by answering half-heartedly! Once you have done this, a PIP topic will emerge that:

- is of interest to you,
- has a high degree of socio-cultural relevance,
- has clear micro-focus.

Where Do You Start?

Most Year 12 Society & Culture students are faced with the following concerns:

- I need to undertake a social investigation
- I don’t know where to begin
- I have no skills or training in research
- I am a little frightened by the task.

Throughout the first few weeks/months of Year 12, you will think of many possible topics for your PIP. Most of these will be discarded as you realise that your chosen topics:

- are too broad
- are not really related to Society and Culture concepts
- pose difficulties in research.

Selecting a Research Question

If you haven’t already selected a research topic, you might like to begin by jotting down some of your ideas. This is called brainstorming. When you brainstorm you jot down ideas as they occur to you.

The important thing is to think of as many ideas as possible. The sorting out and organising of ideas comes later when you have finished brainstorming. Even during the sorting and organising process you will get more new or linked ideas. It is all part of the process of building on what you know from personal experience and public knowledge.

Make sure that you talk to your family and friends about topics you would like to study – add their ideas in as well. The next step will be to work out which of your ideas have social and cultural significance. Select those ideas (which could be suitable topics) and jot them down.

How Suitable Are These Topics?

To determine whether your topic is suitable, you will need to ask the following questions:

- Is it relevant to Society and Culture?
- What fundamental course concepts does it relate to?
- What other important concepts are involved?
- Does it have a cross cultural dimension?
- Can it easily be turned into a research question?
- Will it be possible to obtain research data during the year?
- Do I have access to sufficient resources to carry out the research?
- Is the activity I am investigating legal.

Now, select the topic which you think is most suitable. Write it down.

State the reasons why you want to undertake this research.
The topic you have chosen might well become the basis of your research. Look at your research topic and ask yourself:

• Is the topic too broad, or too narrow?
• Are resources available to research it?
• What are the key ideas?

Remember that a resource for Society and Culture students can be any one of the following:

• a person
• library
• book
• a website
• data gathered from questionnaires
• Government publications (eg Australian Bureau of Statistics)

In order to develop your study topic you must draw a mind map of headings that could prove to be useful include:

• How useful is my research?
• What conclusions can I draw?
• How will I present data? (graphical/statistical/pictorial etc)
• How will I organise data? By what method? (eg chapters/headings etc)
• How will I collect and record information? (methodologies)

Remember that when you draw a mind map, you start at the centre of a blank page. That is where you place your central idea – in this case it would be your research question or hypothesis.

Turning Your Research Topic Into An Enquiry Question

An enquiry question can take several forms:

• descriptive – eg what is?
• explanatory – eg why are?
• predictive – eg what might?
• evaluative – eg what are the merits of?

Whatever form the question takes it must be in a form which it is practical to research.

Write your research topic in the form of an enquiry question.

What are your reasons for doing this study?

• Is my topic an important issue?
• Will it be of benefit to other people?
• Does it interest me?

What are your reason or reasons for selecting this research topic.

Now, let’s get back to your PIP topic. Write down your statement of interest.

Now write your statement of interest as a question.

Now turn your question into a hypothesis?

Reasoning behind the hypothesis.

In this section you state why you came up with this hypothesis.

Information Required

When you have worked out the key questions you need to decide what information is required to answer each of the subsidiary questions. But before you do that you might need to find specific information about key words in your statement.

Are there any problem words in your statement? What are they? Write down the dictionary definitions.

Conclusion

If you have reached this stage in conjunction with your teacher, you should have developed a viable PIP topic and a blue print for the research and writing of your first PIP draft. Make sure that you consult very closely with your teacher as you do so! Remember, the more often you show your teacher what you’ve have written, the greater is the chance that a quality PIP response will emerge.