



This is a guided introduction to a few important research techniques – a “jump-start” for your term paper. All of these tools have oddities; if you are not getting good results from them, please ask a Librarian!

Your topic: _____

A. Specialized Encyclopedias

Find a specialized encyclopedia for your broad subject or specific topic using any **one** of these techniques:

- Find the **LC Call Numbers** for your subject and browse that section of the Reference collection.
- Do a **keyword** search in *CougarCat*, using *encycl*op** in your search (*psychology and encyclop**).
- Go to *NetLibrary*, choose the “**Reference Center**” and search for an **entry** (article) on your topic.
- Use an item **recommended** by your instructor, a librarian, or a Research Guide for your subject.

Title of encyclopedia: _____

Examine an article in the encyclopedia. Is the information referenced?

Who is the author of the article, and what qualifies this person to write on this topic?
(Look for a list of contributors or author information in the front matter or at the end.)

B. Circulating Books

Search *CougarCat* by **keyword** for items on your topic. (Poor results? Try a synonym or a *broader* term.)

Keyword search term: _____ # hits: _____

Choose an item and view its full record. Does it show *subject headings* useful for your search?

Re-do the search if appropriate, using the catalog’s term.

(For example, searching *medicine and ethics* gives a few dozen hits. But the catalog actually uses the term “medical ethics” for this topic. A keyword search on *medical ethics* yields over 60 hits.)

Subject heading: _____ # hits using this term: _____

Pick an available *circulating book* or *e-book* and retrieve or view it. Call Number: _____
Title: _____

Is the information referenced?

Who is the author, and what qualifies this person to write on this topic?
(Try the covers or introduction. Or google the author.)

C. Journal, Trade Journal & Magazine Articles

Search *Academic Search Premier* or, if appropriate, a subject-specific index recommended for your topic.

Do a **keyword** search for your topic. Use *AND*, *OR*, and *truncation* (*) as appropriate.
Note that EBSCO indexes will search your terms *as a phrase* by default.

Keyword search: _____ # hits: _____

Pick an item to see its full record. What *subject headings* are shown for this item?

Re-do the search if appropriate, using the index's terminology.

New keyword search: _____ # hits using this term: _____

Work with your search statement to get a result list of about 50-200 items.

Use "Refine Search" to **limit** this set to easily available items (**CCC Library** or **full-text**). # hits: _____

Now limit this search to articles which are *more than a page* long. # hits: _____

How many of the remaining items are from **journals** (click the link)? ____ From **magazines**? _____

Select an article and examine it either in full-text or, if it's one we own, in print from the *Periodicals* shelves.

Article Title:

Source Journal and issue:

Is the information referenced?

Who is the author, and what qualifies this person to write on this topic?

(Not enough information in your article? Click the author to see others they've written. Or google them.)

D. Websites

Find a promising webpage with *actual information* on your topic using one of these techniques:

- Use the *Directory* feature in *Google*, *LII*, or another search engine to find selected sites on a topic.
- Do a *keyword* search in *Google*, *LII*, or another search engine.
- Use a website *recommended* in a CCC Library Research Guide, or by your instructor or a librarian.

Describe the information on the webpage. (Is it: a published article; a government report; a hobbyist's compilation; a statement of informed - or uninformed - opinion; an out-of-copyright published book; educational or promotional material from an organization; ...?)

Is the information referenced?

Who is the author, and what qualifies this person to write knowledgeably on this topic?