

Step 1: Topic

Write your topic below. This should be a simple phrase or just a couple words.

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Step 2: Keywords

Circle the main concepts in your topic and write them below. (You may find you only have two main concepts.) Come up with related terms for each concept and add them. In many cases you will be coming up with “narrower” terms: *advertising, news, newspapers, television programming* = narrow terms for broader term *media*. Use Google and Wikipedia as other sources of keywords.

| Concept 1 | Concept 2 | Concept 3 |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
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| _____ | _____ | _____ |
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Use these concepts and related terms when you are searching the catalog, periodical databases, and the Web. You may find you need to “mix and match” to turn up the resources you need for your research.

Step 3: Catalog searching

Search the catalog using the **keyword relevance search** and **Subject(s)**. Write down:

A likely title: _____ & call no _____

Or two . . . _____ & call no _____

Subjects: _____

If the books are not available here, have the book sent here by clicking on **Request Item** at the top of the catalog record (you’ll need your SID; select North for pickup location).

Step 4: Database searching

1. Search **ProQuest** for articles on your topic. Remember to combine your keyword concepts with the Boolean operator **and**. Review my web page on finding articles to remind yourself how to construct a search that a database will understand. Keep it simple! Use **or** and **not** only if you need to. Remember to click on **full text**.
2. Email yourselves articles you think you will help your research. Before sending, select the citation style MLA (**though this isn't perfect**).
3. Topics in ProQuest (if any):

Follow these links for more articles on your topic.

4. Explore at least two other databases. Are some of these databases better for your research than others? Familiarize yourself with their features and email yourself the results.
 - Academic Search Premier
 - eLibrary Academic
 - a reference database of your choice

Now your “research kit” is nearly complete. 😊

Step 5: On your own:

Books:

- Find the book/s you turned up in your catalog search.
- Browse the shelves in the related call number range/s for more books.
- Check for reference books that might have information on your topic.

Websites:

- Search effectively and with a critical eye. Remember to evaluate what you find for authority (who wrote it? an expert?), currency (is it up to date?), and bias (does it have a standpoint? Does the source provide other standpoints?).
- Use the pathfinder pages on the class guide and other authoritative pages (.gov, .edu) for more resources on your topic.