



Library Research Guide

1. **Pick a Good Topic:** not too broad or too narrow.
 - See handout “Reference Sources for Speeches and Papers” for suggestions of where to look for ideas and information
2. **Plan Your Search: use the right source for the type of information you are seeking.**
 - Books, subject encyclopedias, and subject dictionaries for background and overviews
 - Periodical articles, pamphlets, and Web sites for current and specific aspects of a topic
 - Almanacs & yearbooks for facts and statistics
 - Best bet for statistics: *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, REF HA202 .S8
 - The “Subject Guides” links on the library home page are a good starting point
3. **Find Books & Pamphlets**
 - Go to the Library’s home page, <http://www.century.edu/library/>
 - Type a search into the catalog search box on the “Books & More” tab
 - Be sure to write down the location and call number for the item you want
 - If Century College Library does not have the book you need, it can be sent here from another library. Ask the reference staff about Interlibrary Loans (ILL)
4. **Find Articles**

Online Indexes & Articles: Select a database from the “Databases A-Z” list on the “Articles, Databases & More” tab on the Library home page, <http://www.century.edu/library/>

 - [African American Studies Center](#) – Articles, images, primary source materials
 - [American History in Video](#) – Newsreels, archival footage, and documentaries
 - [American Journal of Nursing](#) – Articles from this journal
 - [ARTstor](#) – Images of art, architecture, and archeology
 - [Britannica Online Academic Edition](#) – Contents of the *Encyclopaedia* and other resources
 - [CAMIO](#) – Images of art from the [collections of prominent museums](#)
 - [CQ Researcher](#) – In-depth reports on current events and controversial issues
 - [EBSCO](#) – A wide selection of databases on a variety of topics
 - [Films on Demand](#) – Thousands of hours of streamed video content on a variety of topics
 - [Gale](#) – A wide selection of databases on a variety of topics
 - [JSTOR](#) – Humanities and social sciences articles
 - [LexisNexis](#) – Business, news, and legal resources
 - [MICROMEDEX and CareNotes](#) – Healthcare and disease information
 - [MnLINK](#) – MN library catalogs, databases, and indexes
 - [Nursing](#) – Articles from the journal of the same name
 - [PALConnect Linker](#) – A list of all Century print and online periodical subscriptions
 - [ProQuest](#) – Many current U.S. and international newspapers and historical *New York Times* and *Minneapolis Tribune*
 - [PubMed](#) – The free Internet version of Medline
 - [Reference USA](#) – Business and residential information
 - [Reference Universe](#) – Access to print and online reference materials
 - [Salem Health](#) – Access to health reference works including Magill’s Medical Guide
 - [Salem Literature](#) – Access to Masterplots and the Critical Insights series
 - [Wilson](#) – Articles on all aspects of the arts
 - [Women and Social Movements in the United States, 1600-2000](#) – Projects that interpret and present documents, most of which are not otherwise available online
 - [Writer’s Reference Center](#) – A one-stop resource for all of the tools necessary to write and research effectively

These databases index articles, images, videos, and more. Some databases contain only full-text information. Some include citations, citations with abstracts, and full-text articles.

- Articles that are **full-text can be displayed and printed**
- **If not full-text, click on “Check for Full-Text/Request via Interlibrary Loan”**
 - If it is full-text in another database - **locate and print it**
 - If the library owns the magazine - **check it out from the circulation desk**
 - If the library doesn't own the magazine - **request the article through ILL**

Print Indexes

- *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, Art Index, Social Sciences Index*, etc. are located on the Index shelves in the library. In addition, there are a variety of subject indexes and bibliographies that can help you locate information.

5. Find Web Sites

The Internet is a vast computer network; there are many millions of documents on the Web. They are organized by Web page. Each Web page has its own address (also called a URL). With so much to choose from, finding the information you need sometimes is a challenge. Also, since anyone can add information to the Internet, it is important to be selective.

Select a starting point. Here are a few:

- Use a subject index or directory, such as Internet Public Library: <http://www.ipl.org/>
- Google Scholar enables you to search specifically for scholarly literature: <http://scholar.google.com/>
- Use a search engine such as <http://www.google.com> or <http://alltheweb.com>. Read the help screens to learn how to effectively search using your favorite search engines

What you should not look for on the Web:

- Articles – Use the library's subscription databases to find a good selection
- Books – Use online library catalogs

6. Evaluate Sources

- Determine the purpose. Is it trying to inform, convince, or sell something?
- Consider its authority. Are the qualifications, experiences, or institutional affiliations of the author(s) stated? Is the publisher/Web host reputable? Are sources cited? Does it look professional?
- Check its timeliness. If you need current research, look at the copyright or publication date of the book or article. If it is a Web site, can you tell if the information is current?
- Consider the information. Is it relevant or useful for your topic? Can you use this information to support or challenge a position you plan to take in your paper?

7. Cite Sources

Record all information you will need for your bibliography as you do your research. Many Century College courses use the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* as the authority on how to cite sources correctly. Check with your instructor for the correct way to cite your sources, and use the required format.

For more information on how to do research **do a Subject Term search for “research writing” in the Library Catalog** and take a look at some of the books the library has on the subject, or read the U of M's online Library Research Guide, <http://tutorial.lib.umn.edu>. Some sections are specific to U of M resources, but other parts are of general interest.