

Library Research Checklist

Understand the Instructor's Assignment

- Has the topic already been assigned or have you selected a topic?
- What do you already know about the topic?
- How much information do you need? Is your assignment a five minute speech or a ten page paper?
- What kind of information do you need? Scholarly research or general interest?

Gather Background Information and **Develop** the Topic

Whether or not you have chosen a subject, the following resources will provide you with preliminary information and may yield additional or related concepts to help you define your topic.

- Brainstorming
 - Concept/Mind Mapping
 - Outlining
- General Reference Materials
 - *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (in print; online), *Encyclopedia Americana*, *World Book*
 - Wikipedia
 - Google Search
- Subject-Specific
 - Encyclopedias
 - Dictionaries
 - Etc.
- Books on your topic can be found through the WebCat online catalog.
 - Search WebCat by "words or phrase"
 - If your search is unsuccessful, try different words
 - Record the call number and retrieve the books from the third floor.

Focus the Topic and **Find** Current Information

Periodical (journals, newspapers, and magazines) articles generally provide the most up-to-date and focused information on a specific topic.

- There are many resources available to help you locate articles on a particular subject. Please ask a librarian at the Information Desk for assistance.
- When searching for information on a topic, remember:
 - Be Flexible: Experiment with synonyms for your subject.
 - Be Precise: Make sure to record the complete bibliographic citation of an article, including the author, title of the article, periodical name, volume number, page, and date.
 - Be Organized: Keep a record of what you searched, where things were found, and which words were used in your searching.