

# How to do research

## YC Library Research Guidelines

### Step 1

#### Be flexible and willing to rethink and reformulate your ideas!

Sometimes the topic you choose may be of local interest and not covered in national news sources, or your topic may be so new that it has not shown up yet in any resource, or you need to use different search terms to describe your topic.

### Step 2

#### Identify words that describe your topic and put them in the form of a question:

Example: What effect does advertising have on the eating habits of women?

Identify the **concepts** (underlined); think of synonyms.

| Concept A: | Concept B:  | Concept C:      | Concept D: |
|------------|-------------|-----------------|------------|
| effect     | advertising | eating disorder | women      |
| impact     | television  | anorexia        | woman      |
| outcome    | mass media  | bulimia         | female     |

| Concept A: | Concept B: | Concept C: | Concept D: |
|------------|------------|------------|------------|
|            |            |            |            |
|            |            |            |            |
|            |            |            |            |

#### If you are searching the library's catalog:

Do a **keyword** or **subject** search.

- A **keyword search** works best when you do not know the "official" subject heading for your topic, the subject heading is very broad or you're looking for a new trend.
- A **subject search** works best when you do know the "official" subject heading for your topic and you want to narrow your results. For example, books in the catalog on the "*death penalty*" will usually be indexed under the "official" subject of "*capital punishment*."

### Step 3

#### What kinds of information do you need?

Overview or Background? (encyclopedia)

Books? (catalog)

Journal, magazine, newspaper articles? (databases)

Both sides of an argument (Opposing Viewpoints, CQ Researcher, SIRS)

Current facts and statistics? (reference resources, web links)

### Step 4

#### Find Background Information

Use encyclopedias, textbooks, dictionaries, reference lists and bibliographies.

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#### **Step 5**

##### **Search the Catalog**

Use the catalog to find books, videos, CD's, DVD's, etc. in the Yavapai Library Network (YLN) collections. Starting with a keyword search, you can locate items. Write down the call numbers for items within this library or place holds on items in other libraries. You can also use the information you find on a particular item to help you explore related subject headings. When the information on a book is found, click on the subject headings on the left side of screen to find other relevant resources.

#### **Step 6**

##### **Search the Library Databases**

Use the library databases to find journal, magazine and newspaper articles.

Articles can be read online, printed or emailed. Suggested general databases are:

- ProQuest Research Library
- Alt-Press Watch
- MAS Ultra School
- SIRS Researcher
- CQ Researcher

#### **Step 7**

##### **Find Information on the World Wide Web**

The World Wide Web can be a great source of information on every topic. But beware -- anyone with a computer can create a web page, free from the watchful eye of an editor or fact-checker. From the Library home page, select *Resources by Subject* to find library-suggested web pages.

#### **Step 8**

##### **Evaluate Information and Sources**

Finding information is only part of the research process. Use *How to Find, Evaluate, Write, Cite* from the library home page to analyze and critically think about the best and most relevant sources for your papers.

#### **Step 9**

##### **Cite Your Sources in a Standard Format & Prepare Your Works Cited Page**

Be sure to give credit when you use other people's work or ideas – and use the format required by your instructor. Use *How to Find, Evaluate, Write, Cite* from the library home page for citation examples.

#### **Step 10**

##### **Want personal help with your research? Ask a Reference Librarian**

The Reference Librarians are at the library to offer assistance. Feel free to consult with the librarians to help you find what you are looking for – finding a topic, putting together your search strategy, finding resources or making the best use of the vast library services available to you!