

Glendale College Library Information Competency Workshops

Research Strategies

Objective: This worksheet will help you get started with the research process and organize your results in order to manage the many steps involved in doing research.

Research is a complex and lengthy process - the library and its resources can help. Librarians are always available to consult with you. In addition, you can find books (reference, circulating, and reserve), articles (print or online), databases, Internet resources, etc. Much of this information can be located on the library's Web site: <http://www.glendale.edu/library>

1. Identify the details of the assignment:

What type of assignment is it?	Research paper, Essay, Opinion paper, Review, Annotated Bibliography, Other
How long does your paper need to be?	
What kinds of sources can you use for your assignment?	Internet sources, Books, Articles, Multimedia (visual, sound), Other
Do you need very current or historical sources? Both?	

2. What is your topic? _____

Hint: Need help choosing a topic? Try one of these sources:

Title	Location
<i>10,000 Ideas for Term Papers, Projects, Reports and Speeches</i>	Ref 808.02 L232o
<i>CQ Researcher Online</i> (Browse by Topic)	Library's Web site - Databases
<i>Opposing Viewpoints</i> (Browse the list of Issues)	Library's Web site - Databases
<i>ProQuest</i> (TOPICS tab at top)	Library's Web site - Databases

3. What is your research assertion (this might become your thesis statement)? This is what you are setting out to prove or disprove in your paper. Keep the statement simple, straightforward, but take a definite stand.

4. What are the main concepts you need to search for? (You can identify them from your statement above).

Line A: _____

5. Identify synonyms and related terms (keywords) for each of the main concepts listed in #4.

Line B: _____

Line C: _____

6. Identify the most appropriate library resources for your topic. From the library's homepage click on the **Database Descriptions** link for a list of databases to choose from. Which databases look most relevant to your topic?
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7. Use the terms you identified in Line A (# 4 on this worksheet) to do a search in ProQuest. Be sure to put separate terms in separate search boxes. Read through your list of results to evaluate your search. Do the article titles seem relevant to your topic? ___ Yes, ___ No

Do a second search using your synonyms and related terms from Line B and/or Line C (# 5 on this worksheet). Again, skim your list of results. Are the articles different? ___ Yes, ___ No If yes, are they different in a major or subtle way?

If you have time, do a third search and this time be creative; maybe use words you discovered looking through the results of your previous search.

Finally, find one article that you like and think will be a good credible source for your research topic and email it to yourself

8. Keep a log of all the searches you have tried so you don't repeat them. Example:

Database Used	Search terms	Results
ProQuest	health care reform	103,326
ProQuest	health care reform and public option	585
Online Catalog	health care reform and united states (keyword search)	64
Online Catalog	health care reform and united states (subject kw search)	39
netLibrary	health care reform united states (full text search)	1,176
netLibrary	health care reform (keyword search)	21

10. Collect the necessary information for your Works Cited or References page.

Resource	General Information Needed	What to Print
Book	Author, Title, Date, Publisher, Place of Publication	Record from Online Library Catalog
Article	Author, Article Title, Journal Name, Volume, Issue, Date, Page Numbers	Record from Database or First Page of Full-text Article
Web Site or Web Page	Author, Page Title, Publisher, Date, URL (Web Address), Date the page was accessed	First page of the Web Site