

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

Researching in the Library: Six Steps to Successful Searching searching.html (12 minutes)

Hi! I'm Linda Baker, one of the librarians at the El Centro College Library.

I'm looking for information for a research project. Where should I start? Let's start at the El Centro College Library website (<http://www.elcentrocollege.edu/library>).

Let's explore the 6 steps to successful searching. These 6 steps will save you time and energy when looking for information – no matter what you are looking for – books, databases or web.

Step #1: Choose a topic.

The **Research Starting Guide** will help you. Many of the databases that are listed here will provide list topic ideas, along with providing information on any of the topics listed. Instant information!

Step #2: Brainstorm your topic.

What other keywords, synonyms or spelling variations are there for your topic?

Jot these down. For example, ADHD is also referred to as attention deficit disorder. When researching kids, you would also jot down child, children or adolescence as possible spelling variations or synonyms.

Step #3: Outline your topic.

An outline helps you determine what you will cover about your topic – are you including history, research, current issues, pros and cons?

Outlining also helps you determine if your topic is too narrow to write much about (not finding much information) or if it's too broad (there is too much to cover – too much information).

Step #4: Gather Information

Try to use the “triangle of information” when researching:

- Books – good for basic information, history, or statistics
- Newspapers or magazines – good for current information
- Web – as an additional source of information. The databases can include links to credible, reliable websites

How much information will you need? Are you writing a 5-10 page research paper or doing a 3-5 minute speech? A speech doesn't require very much information – just the highlights of the topic.

The **Research Starting Guide** will often provide you with the best databases on almost any topic. I like to call these the “Wal-Mart” databases of information. As an El Centro student, you have free access to databases – 24/7! Millions of sources of information!

Let's check out *Academic Search Complete* – it includes articles from over 4,000 publications!

At home, when you click on the title of the database, you'll see a screen asking you two questions – your name and your student ID number. Fill in these blanks and you'll be taken to the search screen.

I'm searching for information about violence on TV. I'm going to use some **searching strategies** to help me.

Type in nouns as **keywords** in any search box. Computers are very literal. Words such as ‘the impact of TV on violence’ or “the dangers of violence on TV” all share the same keyword nouns – TV and violence. We can't predict what adverbs, adjectives or verbs an author might use to connect these keywords, so we search by using only nouns.

Connect your keywords with **AND**. And allows the computer flexibility. Without “AND”, your computer would literally look for these two words as a phrase – the two words next to each other in the exact order that you typed them

in. AND allows the computer to search for the words in any order with other words falling in-between. Now I can find violence on TV or the impact of TV on violence.

Let's connect our synonyms or word variations by using **OR** or *, the wildcard character. TV can be referred to as television. I should search for both words. OR comes to the rescue. OR allows us to search for synonyms. Always remember to put OR searches inside parenthesis.

If I want to further narrow my topic by focusing on children, let's add another AND with another OR set of synonyms: (child* or children or adoles*).

When you have words with similar beginnings but multiple endings, use a wildcard character. Any letters can replace the *.

My final search is: (TV or television) and violence and (child* or children or adoles*)

Step #5: Evaluate your results

Didn't get enough articles or too many? Review your keywords and searching strategy. Ask a librarian for additional ideas or tips.

You can revise your search at any time.

The database brings back the most relevant articles first – those it thinks come closest to what you are looking for. You can narrow down by dates or other qualifiers by checking out the database options.

I'm narrowing my results by changing the search to articles written in the last 8 years. Click update.

Read the article summaries and determine which articles are the best for your research.

Here's the article title, author, journal or magazine title, date, volume and issue number, pages and the brief summary. To read the article, click on either PDF FULL TEXT or HTML FULL TEXT. I can add this article to a folder so that I can email all of my articles at one time.

I can narrow my results further by academic journals written by experts or by newspapers or magazines. For an English paper, I would probably use magazines or newspapers. For Psychology, Religion, or Nursing, I would use academic journals.

Let's click on an article to see what we find. You can print – email – download any article. I suggest emailing any articles that look remotely useful. Emailing offers you the opportunity to get works cited information – in the format that you are required to use for your class – APA, MLA or Chicago.

Step #6: Putting it all Together

Take notes or underline the desired parts of the articles you will use in your paper. Make sure to paraphrase into your own words and give credit to your source. Even when your paraphrase, you are required to give credit to the sources within your paper AND on the Works Cited/References page.

Write a rough draft, revise, type and proof your paper. Ask the Learning Center for help in writing your paper.

NoodleTools, found on the Library homepage, (link) will help you create your Works Cited or Reference page.

If you are not finding what you are want, let the librarians be your information shopping guides. Feel free to ASK A LIBRARIAN for help. We are available 7 days a week – from early morning until late evening.

We look forward to hearing from you – in person, over the phone or virtually through ASK A LIBRARIAN, which is available even after the Library is closed!

Happy researching!