The following will guide you through the research process.

**Choosing Your Topic**
Read the description for your assignment.

1. What is your topic?

2. Think about how long your finished assignment must be and how many sources you need.
   Is your topic:
   ___ Too Broad - Look at your topic. How can you focus it to fit the assignment?
   ___ Too Narrow - Look at your topic. How can you broaden it fit your assignment?
   ___ Just Right - Your topic has a focus and a direction that meets the size requirements and that will have enough information to examine it in detail.

   **Don’t proceed until you have a topic that’s just right for your assignment.**

3. Write your topic as a research question that you can answer with the information you find.
Your Research Plan

4. What types of sources do you need for your assignment? Select all that apply.

___ Books and/or eBooks - extensive information, published years after an event

___ Journals - scholarly, published months after an event

___ Magazines - general information, published weeks after an event

___ Newspapers - general information, published days after an event

___ Webpages - mainly general but possible scholar and expert information, published minutes to hours after an event

___ Other:

5. Do you need primary sources? ___ Yes ___ No

   If yes, what primary sources will you use?

Your Search Strategy

6. Brainstorm what words you may use to find information for your topic and answer your research question.
7. Select the best words from question 6 to build your search strategy.

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Depending on your topic, you may need less or more than three concepts. You may also need to do separate searches for different sections or aspects of your topic. A single search may not find all the information you need.
8. Look at your Research Plan on page 2. What databases or resources will you search to find the sources you need? Select all that apply.

___ Library Catalog

___ Library Databases
Which ones?

___ Search Engines for Web
Which ones?

___ Other:

9. Search the databases or resources using your search strategy.

10. Did you find relevant sources?

___ No - Adjust your search. Are you using the right database? Are you using the right search strategy? Different words or search fields? Do you need to add more words or remove some?

Don’t proceed until you find relevant sources for your research.

___ Yes - List the sources you found and will use.
Find the books. Save or print the articles and/or webpages.
5 Research Helper

Evaluating Information

11. Evaluate each of your sources.

Using Information

12. Use the information to complete your assignment.

Do not plagiarize, and follow fair use guidelines to observe copyright.

Citing Sources

13. Use the citation style required for your assignment. Write a citation for each of your sources. You may have more or less than 5 citations. It depends on your topic and your assignment.

___ APA  ___ MLA  ___ Other:

Citation for Source 1

Citation for Source 2

Citations for Source 3