Credible Sources – Library Databases and the Web

Welcome with a review of background research and discussion of planning, searching, and organizing the next steps of research

Critically reading background information uncovers the main points: the who, what, when, where, and how. The next steps are using this information to search for articles on the issues identified as the main points. This research will support the analysis or argument in the body of your research paper. The library offers credible sources from databases that index scholarly, peer-reviewed journal articles to complete the next steps of the research process.

The main tasks of academic research are:

1. Planning – using the assignment to guide the research project
2. Searching databases and credible sources on the Web - using a list of words found during background research that detail or describes the topic.
3. Organizing – Save citations as you search and make notes that summarize useful information from the article in your own words along with quotes and paraphrases to use in the paper. Annotated bibliographies or Literature Reviews are formal methods to organize research. All methods are ways to plan and outline to create a logical discussion that flows from introduction through conclusion.
4. Collaboration, meeting with a professor, librarian, peer tutor or classmate to talk about research, citation, and writing.

Searching, reading results lists, and skimming articles

Demonstrate a search in Ebsco:

- Navigate to library webpage and click on the A – Z list
- Select EBSCO search with a term from background information on assigned topic.
- Using a list of words from background reading begin search terms.
- Demonstrate typing in a search term and note that as you type, a drop down list with terms for modifying the search appears.
- Discuss how to limit or narrow a search by context like location, gender.
- Explain using Boolean operators AND, OR, NOT for focusing a search.
- Give examples of searches from a list of words about the topic and explain how to note the search and compare results.
- Demonstrate the Refine Results features for focusing the search using several terms.

Using the Results List

Scroll through results list and discuss how to read a results list, in Google Chrome use zoom to enlarge text. Select one entry in the results list to point to author(s), Journal, pages… to demonstrate how using the results can aid in selecting or rejecting articles.

Skimming Articles

Open the article and discuss quick reading or skimming articles using Ctrl/F to search for keywords in an article. This is method for searching and selecting articles. Critical reading of articles for understanding and selecting appropriate quotes and paraphrases is a necessary part of the research process.
Discuss Organizing Research Handout: Demonstrate choosing and saving information about an article for a research paper by opening a blank organizing document saving a citation, search terms, and comments to demonstrate and discuss how this supports writing a research paper.

What about the Web?
Searching the Web offers options for credible sources from colleges and universities or government and non-profit websites To narrow a search in Google to only government (.gov), college or university websites (.edu) or non-profit organizations (.org) by their domain use this technique: Search term > the word ‘site’ > colon > domain. Example: poverty site: .gov.

What if there is little or no information about your topic in databases or traditional online sites?
- Demonstrate a credible website: http://www.pewresearch.org/
- Look at the bias: https://www.allsides.com/bias/about-bias
- A site for pro/con evaluation: http://www.procon.org/

What makes a source is credible?
**Authority** is important in determining the credibility of a source you are considering using to support your writing because it establishes credibility

- Who wrote the information?- Author may refer to an individual, a company, or an institution
- Is the author's name listed? Is there a link to the author's biographical information?
- What are the author's credentials?

Credentials, or the title, such as professor, doctor, specialist, etc. or degree, such as MA, MS, MD, PhD, etc. show that the author is recognized as an authority in the field, either through education (by earning a degree) or by job title or job experience and affiliations. To find information needed to evaluate a website look for an About Us or the Contact Us, this information may be a tab at the top of the page or in a list at the bottom of the home page.

**Currency** – is the information current, it is best to search for information published within five years.

**Accuracy, Objectivity, and Coverage** - is the information accurate, is it fair and complete?
- In evaluating a website, who owns the site may be a factor into determining objectivity or bias.
- Determining the purpose of a source can help in determining objectivity, is the purpose to teach, inform entertain, sell, or persuade.
- In addition to determining the credibility using the criteria also look closely at what the author is actually saying in the article. Evaluate with common sense using basic evaluative questions like, is the article content too good or bad to be true.

Other Web Resources from credible sources
Here are examples of a TED Talks offered by experts in their field of study. Can be a source for background, perspective, and critical thinking.

https://www.ted.com/talks/nate_silver_on_race_and_politics?language=en

https://www.ted.com/talks/clint_smith_how_to_raise_a_black.son_in_america?language=en
Exit ticket:
Students search and email geneva.jewell@kctcs.edu a link to one article on topic with a short list of search terms that for your topic.

Citations
Can be offered as part of this workshop or a short class session with a hands-on workshop for database searches.

A research paper includes ideas and facts gathered from other sources. As you write your paper, you will summarize, paraphrase, or quote directly from these sources.

The process of giving credit to the sources you use is also known as citing your sources.

Why should you cite?

Lends credibility to your work – participation in academic discourse with research.

Demonstrates the authenticity of your work – by showing that you found the information yourself and didn't plagiarize.

Enables your readers to locate your information sources – So, if your professor or another student wants to do research on that same topic, they know the author, title, publisher, date, and/or URL to find the sources.

So every time you quote or paraphrase someone else’s work, you cite:

- who wrote the work
- what is it called
- where can we find it

This information must be cited in two places:

1. In the paragraph where you are quoting or paraphrasing. This is called an In-Text Citation. The author’s last name and page number in parentheses at the end of every sentence in which there is quote or paraphrase.
2. In the Works Cited or References page at the end of the paper.

Best resource for details of MLA Style:

http://jefferson.kctcs.libguides.com/citations

https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/


*There are print copies of MLA handout in Learning Commons.