

How to Conduct your research

1. Start any research project by working with the broadest outlines or topics and slowly narrow your focus, getting more and more specific in topic and sources as you go along.
 - a. Encyclopedic entries are most comprehensive and concise
 - i. Subject-specific encyclopedia
 - b. Historical
 - i. Biographical dictionary
 - ii. Who's Who series
 - c. Reference websites
 - i. Choose a good topic
 - ii. Establish a reasonable thesis
 - iii. Gather enough information to construct an initial outline
 - d. Read books written by experts
 - e. Read magazine and newspaper articles
 - f. Pamphlets
 - g. Anthologies
 - h. Brochures
 - i. Government documents
 - j. Film
 - k. Video
2. Resources
 - a. Published most recently or written by the most respected sources (NOT WIKIPEDIA)
 - b. Gather info from a wide range of sources
 - c. Types
 - i. Primary
 1. Written by people who actually witnessed or participated in an event.
 - ii. Secondary
 1. Written by people who were not actually present at an event, but have studied the subject
3. Where to look for materials
 - a. The card catalog
 - b. Book catalog
 - c. Newspaper index
 - d. Periodical indexes
 - e. Vertica file

- f. Guide to U.S. Government Publications, American Statistical Index, and Congressional information Service Index
 - g. Computer databases
 - h. The Internet
- Set aside solid blocks of time for your research
 - Schedule a handful of extended trips to the library than 15 or 20 brief visits
 - Solid few hours online than 10 minutes here or there
4. Using Online Resources
- a. Long before a paper is due, choose four search engines
 - i. One meta-search engine
 - 1. Copernic
 - 2. Dogpile
 - ii. Three regular
 - 1. Google
 - 2. Hotbot
 - 3. Alta Vista
 - 4. Northern Light
 - b. Use the meta engine first
 - c. Learn each engine's advanced features
 - d. Print out the FAQ pages for each search engine or create your own manual
 - e. Choose three search engines with different strengths
 - f. Use a specialized search engine
 - g. Learn Boolean searches

*** Go to the Burke Library and speak with the circulation desk

- Some are informative some are skimpy
- Some are well-researched, some are just a person ranting
 - **Just because something is on your computer screen doesn't mean it's true!!!**
- Some provide unbiased info, some slant to sell you on their cause
- Some are easy to use; some require search listings
- Some supply info, some link you to other sites
- Some may be gone when you look for them again
- Some are free; some cost a bit

Reference

Fry, R. W. (2005). *How to study*. Thomson Delmar Learning.