

Research Tips

Why Libraries?

1. Libraries have private collections; sometimes you can find special subjects
2. Libraries have quality information
3. Libraries have speed- find information in their databases, bibliographies & card catalog
4. Libraries have tech support- ask a librarian for assistance

Where Do I Start?

1. **Define** what you are looking for
2. **Determine** your information needs
3. **Find** and **retrieve** information
4. **Evaluate**

Can I tell if the information is meant to inform, persuade or entertain me?

Can I recognize the difference between a political fact and a cartoonist's interpretation of it?

Can I recognize the difference between unbiased information and a paid advertisement, infomercial or editorial?

Do I understand visual as well as verbal arguments?

Can I find other sources for the same fact and analyze their credibility?

5. **Organize**

Reference Sources

General encyclopedias- introductory information

Subject encyclopedia- specific topic

Subject dictionary- i.e. "*Historical Dictionary of American Film*"

Handbooks/Manuals

Periodicals- give current information: *newspapers, magazines, journals, trade publications, indexes and abstracts*

Primary Sources- *original data, diaries, letters and interviews*



Searching on the Internet

There are thousands of search engines besides **Google** on the World Wide Web. **Advanced searching** allows you to weed out hundreds of thousands of web sites by enabling you to be very specific about what you need to find.

Here are a few of those search engines:

[All the Web Advanced \(http://alltheweb.com/advanced?advanced=1& \)](http://alltheweb.com/advanced?advanced=1&)

[ASK.com \(http://www.ask.com \)](http://www.ask.com) - students can preview the site before opening it; results are grouped by subject & as a listing. Very nice search engine!

[Clusty \(http://clusty.com \)](http://clusty.com) - groups results in clusters

[Google Advanced \(http://www.google.com/advanced_search?hl=en \)](http://www.google.com/advanced_search?hl=en)

[Google Scholar \(http://scholar.google.com/ \)](http://scholar.google.com/)

[KartOO \(http://www.kartoo.com/ \)](http://www.kartoo.com/) -a visual search engine

[Killer Info \(http://www.killerinfo.com/ \)](http://www.killerinfo.com/) -clustered results from various search engines; NO ADS!

[Ms. Dewey \(http://www.msdevey.com \)](http://www.msdevey.com) – a live librarian (she's very funny) guides your search

Boolean Searching

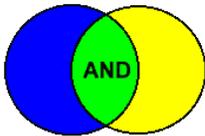
Boolean Searching- use it where it is available (*advanced searching*)

Simple Boolean

Boolean logic is essentially very simple. When used in constructing a search expression, it can be very useful in specifying exactly what information you want.

The basis of Boolean logic can be illustrated by the following diagrams:

Boolean 'AND'



Blue AND Yellow

This is expressed as 'blue **AND** yellow' in a search.

When using **AND** in this search expression, results retrieved will contain both blue and yellow information. The results will not include those documents containing only blue or only yellow information. In the diagram the documents retrieved by using this search expression are contained within the green area.

EXAMPLE: *art AND schools*

This will retrieve all records containing both keywords *art* and *schools*.

Boolean 'OR'



Blue OR Yellow

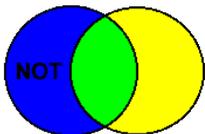
This is expressed as 'blue **OR** yellow' in a search.

When using **OR** in this search expression, results retrieved will contain either blue information, or yellow information, or blue and yellow information together. Such a search will not merely retrieve documents containing only blue information or only yellow information. In the diagram the documents retrieved by using this search expression are contained within all the color areas.

EXAMPLE: *ceramics OR pottery*

This will retrieve all records containing the keywords *ceramics* or *pottery*, as well as those containing both.

Boolean 'NOT'



Blue NOT Yellow

This is expressed as 'blue **NOT** yellow' in a search.

When using **NOT** in this search expression, results will contain only blue. The **NOT** operator will exclude yellow completely and thus any green information will be excluded also. It is important, therefore, to be careful when using this operator in order to avoid hindering your search. In this diagram the documents retrieved by using this search expression are contained within the blue area.

EXAMPLE: *film NOT photography*

This will retrieve all records containing the keyword *film* but not the keyword *photography*.



How Can I Trust a Site?

Databases you access through our school can be trusted. However, how do you know who is behind all the other sites you have located?

A URL with **.gov** as the suffix indicates that the site is a **government site** and you can rely on the information

A URL with **.org** as the suffix indicates that the site is for a **not-for-profit organization** and is usually trustworthy

A URL with **.com** as the suffix **can be owned by ANYONE**; it could be a business, or a kid somewhere in Kansas!

Here's an eight-point evaluation checklist from the **UC Berkeley Library**:

- What can the URL tell you?
- Who wrote the page? Is he, she, or the authoring institution a qualified authority?
- Is it dated? Current, timely?
- Is information cited authentic?
- Does the page have overall integrity and reliability as a source?
- What's the bias?
- Could the page or site be ironic, like a satire or a spoof?
- If you have questions or reservations, how can you satisfy them?

Here's the URL for a complete description of evaluating web pages:

<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Evaluate.html>

You need to be aware of the fact that **ANYONE** can design a web page and put it on the Internet.



Plagiarism

According to Dictionary.com, **plagiarism** is: *"the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original work."* Believe it or not, you can **"self plagiarize"**, which means that you try to copy material you have previously produced and are trying to pass off as a new production.

Types of Plagiarism

"The Ghost Writer"

The writer turns in another's work, word-for-word, as his or her own.

"The Photocopy"

The writer copies significant portions of text straight from a single source, without alteration.

"The Potluck Paper"

The writer tries to disguise plagiarism by copying from several different sources, tweaking the sentences to make them fit together while retaining most of the original phrasing.

"The Poor Disguise"

Although the writer has retained the essential content of the source; he or she has altered the paper's appearance slightly by changing key words and phrases.

"The Labor of Laziness"

The writer takes the time to paraphrase most of the paper from other sources and make it all fit together, instead of spending the same effort on original work.

"The Self-Stealer"

The writer "borrows" generously from his or her previous work, violating policies concerning the expectation of originality adopted by most academic institutions.

from Plagiarism.org



Citing Your Sources

To cite a source is to give credit to the original author. It is the **ONLY** way to use someone else's work without plagiarizing. Here is list of the **times you need to cite**:

- whenever you use quotes
- whenever you paraphrase
- whenever you use an idea that someone else has already expressed
- whenever you make specific reference to the work of another
- whenever someone else's work has been critical in developing your own ideas.

Here are two wonderful tools to assist you in writing your bibliography:

[NoodleBib Express](http://www.noodletools.com/login.php) (<http://www.noodletools.com/login.php>)
[Citation Machine](http://citationmachine.net/) (<http://citationmachine.net/>)

R.P.H.S. Subscription Online Databases



<http://search.ebscohost.com>

12 main databases, including a Spanish version of the site;
Novelist, Points of View, Literary Reference Center and Student Research Center



<http://www.fofweb.com/>

13 databases highlight this site, including American History Online, Modern World History Online, Science Online, Bloom's Literary Reference Online & Ancient Medieval History Online

User name: rphs

Password: scarlet



Review:

Use the three main electronic access points- **topic**, **title** and **author** to search for information in the library;
Evaluate the validity and accuracy of information in any format, **print** or **electronic**;

Organize retrieved materials and information into a basis for a research paper;

Use abstracts & citations to find relevant articles in periodicals, including magazines, newspapers, trade & academic journals and more;

Take the appropriate steps to avoid plagiarism: **CITE YOUR SOURCES!**



Research

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The complete pathfinder for Research can be found here:

<http://www.rpps.net/RPHS/pathfinders.html#Anchor-55713>

Media Center>Reference>Pathfinders>Research