



FORMING A QUESTION & MAKING A RESEARCH PLAN

Library Services

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Tel: 941/590-7630

Narrow your search by (continued)--

Focusing on a geographic area

Example: global warming and the Antarctic ice cap; deforestation in Africa vs. deforestation in South America

Focusing on a limited time period

Example: how global warming began; global warming in the last five years

Broaden your search by—

Considering alternate points of view

Example: what about the evidence against your position?

Checking the subject headings of your best results

Library of Congress Subject headings are provided as links in the Library Catalog and in many databases, often near the end of a record

Focusing on more general issues

Example: discuss your issue as part of a larger problem or situation

Broaden your search by (continued)—

Examining the history of the topic

Example: include the history of your issue and show how the problem has grown

Examining the implications of the topic

Example: what does your issue mean for the economy? ...for Americans? ...for the world at large?

STEP 6:

Search the Subject Specific online databases using your list of terms, subject headings you found in sample searches, and your narrowed or broadened research question.

Use the Research Guides at <http://library.fgcu.edu/Guides/index.html>

Choose a subject category to find lists of Subject Specific databases at <http://library.fgcu.edu/OnlineResources/esources.htm>.

Use the "Other Florida University Catalogs" link to see what the other state universities have.

Repeat steps 4, 5, and 6 until you have the research you need to cover the topics you want

Make sure you include books, journal articles, and web sites that you have carefully evaluated.

Reference Desk: 590-7630
Ask a Question
<http://library.fgcu.edu/forms/askref.htm>

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STEP 1:

Write down your assignment. Make sure you understand what your instructor wants.

- ⇒ How long should the paper be?
- ⇒ Are there any issues in particular that must be covered?
- ⇒ What kind of research will/won't your instructor accept?
- ⇒ ???

If your instructor gives you your assignment in writing, make sure to bring a copy with you to the Library.

STEP 2:

Read some background information. Check reference books and resources to find out what the key terms and issues are. Check the library catalog or ask at the Reference Desk.

Start your research early. The Library can get you copies of things we don't own. Follow the Interlibrary Loan link off the library homepage.

Use recommended Reference Books as listed in the Research Guides at <http://library.fgcu.edu/Guides/index.html>

Use Access Science, Encyclopedia Britannica or Gale Virtual Reference Library through the Library's Online Databases page at <http://library.fgcu.edu/OnlineResources/esources.htm>

Ask the Reference Staff for suggestions.

Ask your Instructor.

Browse the Reference Collection at the call numbers related to your field of study. To learn more about call numbers and subject headings visit <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpsol/lcco/>



STEP 3:

Copy down key terms and phrases from your background material--especially terms you see used often.

Examples:

Key terms from the "Global Warming" article in Access Science: global warming; greenhouse gas; carbon cycle; greenhouse effect

Key terms from the "Genetic Engineering" article in Access Science: genetic; genes; cloning; DNA; genomes; chromosome

When looking for web sites, try using Scirus.com, or Britannica Online's Internet Guide through the Library's web page to quickly find reputable, authoritative sites.

STEP 4:

Try sample searches in the Library Catalog and in the Major Full Text Databases using your key terms.

STEP 5:

Broaden or narrow your search depending on what your sample searches reveal.

Too many results? Narrow your search

Too few results? Broaden your search

Narrow your search by--

Adding key terms to your search using AND, OR, NOT

Visit http://florin.syr.edu/webarch/searchpro/boolean_tutorial.html to learn how

Checking the Subject Headings of your best results

Library of Congress Subject headings are provided as links in the Library Catalog and in many databases, often near the end of a record

Focusing on a specific issue

Example: the carbon cycle and deforestation; greenhouse gases and automobiles
(continued on other side)

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