



# Starting Your Research TIPS

The following questions and tips are designed to help you research effectively and efficiently.

## QUESTIONS YOU NEED TO ASK YOURSELF

1. What do you already know about your subject?

What aspects of this topic interest you?  
Where would you go to find out more?

2. How long has your subject existed? Is it a relatively new concept?

What broad discipline does it fall into? (e.g., History, Engineering, Education, Political Science, Medicine, Health, Literature, Art, Sociology, etc.).

3. What Kinds of Resources would be useful for this paper/project?

For example, would any/all of the following help you find out about your topic?

Newspapers?

Magazine Articles?

Journal Articles?

Books? (Reference Books, Monographs, Etc.)

Primary Resources? (e.g., Letters, Diaries, First-Hand Accounts, Interviews)

Government Documents?

4. How long do you have to do this Paper/Project?  
How long does the paper/project need to be?

## START WITH THE RESTAURANT SCHOOL AT WALNUT HILL COLLEGE LIBRARY HOME PAGE

See especially:

- [The Library Catalog](#) (for books and other materials in the Library)
- [Electronic Databases](#)
  - for a variety of electronic resources
  - for access to online indexes, some with full text

## HOW TO SEARCH

When should you use keywords, subject headings, phrases, single words?

**Keywords** usually give you more resources (a broader search).

**Subject Headings**, which use a standardized vocabulary, usually give you more specific resources on your topic.

## BOOLEAN LOGIC

*Boolean Operators (especially OR and AND) allow you to combine words in a logical way to get the results you want.*



USE “**AND**” TO *NARROW* YOUR SEARCH AND “**OR**” TO *BROADEN* YOUR SEARCH

## EVALUATE YOUR RESOURCES

USE THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS TO EVALUATE RESOURCES (especially from the sites you find on the Internet):

Who wrote it and can you tell the author’s affiliation or background?

Who is the intended audience?

What is the scope or coverage of the resource?

Why was it written/published (is the material objective or biased)?

When was it published?

Where was it published (who is the publisher?)?

How is the information presented (is there any supporting material?)?

How accurate does the information appear?

## POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Library research is a process and sometimes you will need to use the “trial and error” method.
- Record what you find so that you will have the information for your bibliography.
- Follow leads (e.g., browse nearby books, use references in materials you find).
- Be creative and flexible.
- Library research typically takes longer than you think it will; try to allow yourself enough time.
- Ask if you need help.

**WHERE TO GO IF YOU NEED HELP OR HAVE QUESTIONS:**

**ASK THE LIBRARIAN!!!!**