How to Search

Search Tips

- **Keywords**: Identify the **most important** words in your research question and use those for searching. Cut out extra words like: the, and, or.
- **Boolean Operators**: Try different combinations of search terms, and use Boolean operators:
  - **AND** – to narrow your search: caribou AND wolves
  - **OR** – to broaden your search: caribou OR reindeer
  - **NOT** – to narrow your search: reindeer NOT Santa
- **Limiters**: Limit by date, geography, or by type of publication (academic/scholarly journal, general interest magazine). This allows you to find more specific information that is related to your search.
- **Phrase searching**: Try phrase searching – use double quotation marks around two words that you want to use together, for example: “water quality”. This way you won't get results that have only "water" or only "quality".

REMEMBER:

- Use Keywords
- Use Boolean search terms: AND, OR, NOT
- Think of the board topics and related concepts

**MOTIVATION** gets better results. Enjoy your subject matter!
**NOTICE** which resources are cited in the paper. Look at the bibliography to read that paper and include it in your research.
**EVALUATE** your sources!

How to do research

Research is not just typing a question into a search engine and selecting the first five materials that appear in your search. It's a process of exploration as you investigate a question. The following will help you develop the skills needed to do in-depth research.

**The Search process:**

- Understand your topic & read background info
- Design a research question
- Develop your keywords
- Start searching
- Build your reference list
- Repeat
- Add new keywords you learned from the papers you read
- Review the cited papers listed in the bibliography of any relevant documents
- Go further afield and look to government documents and different organizations
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The process broken down:

**Understand your topic and read background information**

This is the time it's okay to use Google! You want to read newspapers to find out current news - this is a great way to find names of current researchers who will have released new articles. Wikipedia is good for an overview and will link you to primary sources - your peer-reviewed articles.

**Design a research question**

A research question should be open-ended, address a controversy or solve a problem, and be something you can take a stand on. It should inspire action after finding out new information.

To form your question, it should start broad and become narrower and more specific. Some examples:

Pollution -> plastic -> plastic in the ocean -> What can be done to reduce the amount of plastic in the oceans?

Fishing -> commercial fishing -> fishing regulations in the NWT -> What impact do fishing regulations have on commercial fishing in the NWT?

Wildlife -> Moose -> moose harvest in NWT -> What impact does annual moose harvest have on populations in the NWT?

**Develop your keywords**

Your keywords are how you access the data, other research, books and information about your subject matter. They work the best when used in the college Discovery Service, databases, or advanced searches on other websites.

Keywords are important ideas related to your question. You should link different concepts that you can search together, or similar ideas to search together. Not everyone will use the same words to describe situations as you, so you need to think of a variety of words.
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Eg. What can be done to reduce the amount of plastic in the ocean?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept 1</th>
<th>Concept 2</th>
<th>Concept 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ocean</td>
<td>Plastic</td>
<td>Reduce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>water</td>
<td>AND</td>
<td>Garbage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>Clean Up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Pacific Ocean&quot;</td>
<td>Debris</td>
<td>Remove</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Great Pacific Garbage Patch&quot;</td>
<td>Trash</td>
<td>Cleanup</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is a good list of keywords, that represent a variety of concepts related to the question.

To search you would choose one word from each concept, using AND.

For example:

Ocean AND plastic AND reduce

Or you could use words from the same concept using OR.

For example:

Ocean AND plastic OR garbage AND reduce

**Start Searching**

The moment you've all been waiting for! Now that you've got some background information, developed a research question, formed keywords, you're ready to search! But where to start? We recommend starting on the Aurora College EBSCO Discovery Service, found on the homepage [here](#). Not only does it include all of the books, DVDs and journals in all of our libraries, it also includes all the databases we subscribe to. When you're searching here, you're searching over 30 databases with millions of online articles. It's a very efficient place to start.

You can also use relevant government or organization websites to help you find information relevant to you. We have a list of databases if you're looking within a specific field, located [here](#). Google scholar is also a good place to look for academic articles. If you find a citation, but can't find the link, come see us! We can get the article for you.
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Develop your reference list

As you're researching, it's a good idea to think about your reference list, or bibliography. There's nothing worse than having to track down an article after you're done writing your paper! Here's some tips to help you get started on building that reference list:

Know your citation style: What information do you need? Be sure to keep a link to the article, or write down all the information needed: Title, authors, year of publication, website address, journal title, page numbers, date accessed, location.

Build your list of sources in a word document as you find the materials. Building as you go will save you time later.

Copy links to online articles, so you can track down the information later as you need it.

Give yourself time to do the citations and reference list. Writing the paper is only half the work!

And Repeat.

Research is a process. As you read more, you may need to change your research question. You may learn more technical terms and can include them in your list of keywords. As you read the papers and keep seeing that one name pop up, you decide to follow the citation and read more papers. Reading the bibliography of relevant articles can help lead you to seminal articles in the field that provide you with basic facts you can cite.

Feel free to explore further by using government documents and different organizations to find more information that will help answer your question.