Research Methods – Steps
1. **Decide** on what information you need.
2. **Find** information using key words and other search strategies.
3. **Evaluate** the information you have and its relevance to your topic.
4. **Synthesize** and **organize** your sources.
5. **Use** your sources to form your argument

**About Steps 1 and 2:**
Now that you have your topic developed, we can start thinking about how to find resources to support the topic.

- Start by writing your topic down.
  - Example: *Does raising the minimum wage reduce poverty?*

- Pick out the two or three main keywords from your topic
  - Example: *minimum wage, poverty.*

These will be what you use to start searching

- Think about potential synonyms or similar ideas for your keywords that might also be used to describe your topic. You can use these if your initial search doesn't give you many good results. Some topics might not have obvious synonyms, but you can think of similar topics to explore if your initial search doesn't give you enough.
  - Example: *If you don't get many results for minimum wage and poverty, you might also want to look into living wages and standards of living.*

Once you've got your keywords generated, we can move on to **Step 3: Evaluate.**

**Topic Research:** *USE DATABASES and also ADVANCED SEARCH in GOOGLE*

**Recommended Databases:**
- **NEW:** Discovery Service (Ebsohost Discovery Search)
  - “Google-like” tool that searches most of our databases and the book catalog within a single search.
- CQ Researcher
- Opposing Viewpoints
- General Reference Center Gold
- Proquest

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Remember those keywords you generated in “**About Steps 1 and 2**? It's time to use those. Enter those search terms in the database search box.
Not enough results? Try removing a search term. For example: If our "poverty and minimum wage" search doesn't return many articles, search for only minimum wage.

Too many results? Try adding more search terms to narrow down your search. We may want to narrow that down. Searching "minimum wage and poverty and United States" should give us results that focus on the US. Or try different but similar search terms: "Minimum wage and poverty and economics" should give us results that focus more on the economic theories relating to the minimum wage and poverty.

First, try putting your topic in a sentence, such as:
“Is the American media biased?” or
“Are football players ostracized for domestic violence?” or
“Is addiction a disease?” or
“Is home care better than nursing home care?”

TOPIC SEARCH EXAMPLES:

Searching –
1.) “Should the US military continue to support gender integration?”
   ▪ Keywords/Search Terms: “United States Military” and gender
     “US Military” and “gender integration”
     sex roles AND military
     gender neutrality AND military

Start with Discovery Search on Massasoit Library homepage or CQ Researcher database and/or Opposing Viewpoints database.

Searching –
2.) “Are there uncertainties with current diagnosis of borderline personality disorder?”
   ▪ Keywords/Search Terms: “borderline personality disorder” and diagnosis
     “borderline personality disorder” and “uncertain diagnosis”

Start with Discovery Search on Massasoit Library homepage or Cinahl database or Health Reference Center: Academic database and/or Opposing Viewpoints database.
 Searching –
  3.) “Is there availability, quality and accountability in elder care?”
      ▪ Keywords/Search Terms:
        “elder care” and accountability and availability
        “elder care” AND quality

Start with Discovery Search on Massasoit Library homepage or Proquest (all databases) database or Cinahl database or Health Reference Center: Academic database and/or CQ Researcher

 Searching –
  4.) “Is there abuse of the elderly by caregivers?”
      ▪ Keywords/Search Terms: elderly and caregivers and abuse
        “elder abuse” AND caregivers

Start with Discovery Search on Massasoit Library homepage or Cinahl database or Health Reference Center: Academic database and/or CQ Researcher

 Searching –
  5.) “Should the nuclear weapons continue to be manufactured and updated?”
      ▪ Keywords/Search Terms: “nuclear weapons” and manufacture
        “nuclear weapons” and manufacture and modernization

Start with Discovery Search on Massasoit Library homepage or CQ Researcher database and/or Opposing Viewpoints database.

 Searching –
  6.) “Does the use of standardized tests improve education in America?”
      ▪ Keywords/Search Terms: “standardized tests” and education and America (or United States)
        “standardized testing” and performance

Start with Discovery Search on Massasoit Library homepage or Opposing Viewpoints database and/or Educators Reference Complete database.

 Searching –
  7.) “How heroic are we obligated to be in near-terminal conditions?”
      ▪ Keywords/Search Terms: “heroic medicine” and treatment and costs
        “health care” and rationing and costs
        “health care” and rights and costs

Start with Discovery Search on Massasoit Library homepage or Cinahl database or Health Reference Center: Academic database and/or Opposing Viewpoints database.
Searching –

8.) “Is cybersecurity necessary and possible?”
   - Keywords/Search Terms: cyber security (cybersecurity) AND/OR cybercrime

Start with Discovery Search on Massasoit Library homepage or CQ Researcher database and/or Opposing Viewpoints database.

Searching –

9.) “Do the FDA food safety guidelines promote a healthy diet?”
   - Keywords/Search Terms: “FDA guidelines” AND “healthy diet”
     “FDA” AND nutrition
     “government guidelines AND nutrition

Start with Discovery Search on Massasoit Library homepage or CQ Researcher database and/or Health Source - Consumer Edition database and/or Proquest (all databases)

Searching –

10.) “Is DNA testing or genetic screening a reliable tool?”
   - Keywords/Search Terms: “DNA testing” AND reliability
     “genetic screening” AND reliability
     “DNA testing” AND forensics

Start with Discovery Search on Massasoit Library homepage or CQ Researcher database and/or Cinahl database Health Source - Consumer Edition database and/or Proquest (all databases)

Try these same formulas that we suggest above with other topics.

Are you stuck? Do you need to pick a different topic?
If you need to find a topic, go to Opposing Viewpoints database or CQ Researcher database and click on Browse Topics. These are continually updated with new topics; and you will find a variety of issues suggested for research.

Go to eBooks database link under databases*

Search for a Full Text Book on nuclear weapons
Often, you will be able to search within the ebook and view the table of contents

*Note: You may also search for eBooks using the Find Books tab
Additional suggestion _ Web Searching:
Try the keywords in an advanced search in your web browser, such as Google.
  - Browser Search Terms:
    “health care” AND “heroic medicine” AND costs
    site:.org or site:.edu or site:.gov
  - Browser Search Terms: "nuclear weapons" AND manufacture
    site:.org or site:.edu or site:.gov
Videos can be found online by selecting video search instead of web search in your browser

Remember: I am available to help you. Please come and ask for assistance.