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: *Should euthanasia be legal?*

- **Pick out the two or three main keywords from your topic**
  
  - Example: *euthanasia and legal.*

  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 euthanasia and legal, you might also want to look into physician-assisted suicide.*

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 One File

Other Databases for Specific Subject Areas
- **Global Issues in Context:** *International viewpoints on a broad spectrum of global issues, topics, and current events.*

- **Environmental Studies & Policy Collection:** *Collection of journals & reference books covering environmental issues policies from scientific, government and industry perspectives.*
Science In Context:  *Covers astronomy, biology, chemistry, environmental sciences, health & medicine, math, physics with academic journal articles, statistics, experiments, news, images, and videos.*

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 there freedom of speech in online platforms?” or
“Is there a danger with nuclear weapons falling in the wrong hands?” or
“Should juvenile offenders receive the death penalty?” or
“What are the ethical concerns with gene or DNA editing?” or
“Is a physician ever obligated to help a patient die?”
TOPIC SEARCH EXAMPLES:

❖ Searching on the topic of euthanasia.

1.) “Should the euthanasia be legal?”
   ▪ Suggestions for Keywords/Search Terms:
     “physician - assisted suicide”
     “terminally ill”
     “terminal care”
     “end of life care”
     “medical futility”
     “life prolonging treatment”
     “Heroic Medicine” / $$$ cost for treatment

Start with Discovery Search on Massasoit Library homepage, or Use the A-Z Database list to search PubMed or CQ Researcher and/or Opposing Viewpoints databases.

❖ Searching on the topic of freedom of speech in online platforms.

2.) “Is there availability, quality and accountability in elder care?”
   ▪ Suggestions for Keywords/Search Terms:
     “internet platforms and freedom of speech”
     “social media and freedom of speech”

Start with Discovery Search on Massasoit Library homepage, or Use the A-Z Database list to search and/or CQ Researcher databases

❖ Searching –

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

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

❖ Searching –

4.) “Does the use of standardized tests improve education in America?”
   ▪ Keywords/Search Terms: “standardized tests” and education and America (or United States) or
“standardized testing” and performance
Start with Discovery Search on Massasoit Library homepage or Opposing Viewpoints database and/or Educators Reference Complete database.

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*

  Example: Search for a Full Text Book on native american history
  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:
    “debt” AND “africa”
    site:.org or site:.edu or site:.gov
  - Browser Search Terms: "native American” AND history
    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.