



Information Literacy Training

What do you need?

Determine your research topic and be prepared to search for relevant information

Overview

When conducting research, it is necessary to do some preparation first.

Touro College Libraries provides access to proprietary databases with almost 100,000 ebooks and over 56,000 ejournals.

You will save time and achieve better results by taking the time to determine your research needs first. This tutorial will show you how.

Choose a Topic

What do you want to find out about? Research traditionally begins with a question, or general area of interest.

For example, suppose we want to know how children respond to their parents divorcing.

Our research topic could be: The Impact of Divorce on Children

Refine Your Topic

In order to find a manageable amount of quality information, it is important to choose a topic that is neither too broad nor too narrow.

Our sample topic – The Impact of Divorce on Children – is a little too broad.

One way to narrow down a topic is by using limiters. We can identify limiters by asking “Who What Where When How Why” questions.

Refine Your Topic – an Example

Let's apply some of these questions to our topic and see if our answers can narrow it down.

Who? We mention children, but that isn't very specific. Instead, let's use very young children or toddlers.

What? The Impact of Divorce

Where? This is a good limiter! Let's use the United States.

When? Another good limiter! Let's use the last ten years.

Select Key Terms

Our topic is now more specific: What is the Impact of Divorce on toddlers in the United States over the last ten years?

What are the most important words in this question? What words would change the answer if you removed them?

These are the words or key terms you will use to search for information on this topic.

Key Terms Example

Write out your sample topic and underline the key terms.

For Example:

What is the Impact of Divorce on toddlers in the United States over the last ten years?

Find Synonyms for Key Terms

Different authors do not always use the same terminology. In order to locate the best results on a topic, you will need to conduct your search using multiple words that mean the same thing.

Create a list of key terms, and brainstorm alternate words or phrases. You may find using a Thesaurus helpful.

For example:

Key Term	Synonym	Synonym
Toddlers	Children aged 1-3	Young Children
Divorce	Marital Separation	Disunion

Be Ready to Revise!

As you conduct research, you may want to change your topic for a number of reasons:

- Your topic is too narrow
- Your topic is too broad and you are finding too much information
- As you read, you learn things that cause you to ask different questions

Revision is an important part of the research process and is highly encouraged. Remember to keep track your key terms and synonyms as you revise your topic.

Worksheet – print and fill out as needed.

Topic :

Who:

What:

Where:

When:

Why:

How:

Additional Information

Information Literacy

- <http://www.tourolib.org/TILI>