

## *Research Strategies Assignment*

The following questions are designed to help you understand the process of doing research. The importance of this exercise is not in the actual answers, but in the **steps** you go through to get to the answers. Therefore, you are requested to focus not on the *outcome*, but on *what you learn* about the resources as you use them. Please read the directions for each exercise carefully, and ask a member of the library staff for help at any time. [Print a copy of this assignment.]

Your library has its own website where most of your research will begin. If you want to access this site off campus, the Virtual Library web address for our region is:

<http://www.ivytech.edu/library/madison>

1. Learn to select an appropriate research topic. (Consider completing IvyTILT module 2.)

Choose a topic that is of interest to you. It may be a current social problem, an issue about which you have a strong opinion or a research paper you have been assigned for a course. If you don't already have a topic, you may try one of these databases: ProQuest (Topic Finder), SIRS (Topic Browse), or Opposing Viewpoints [if you can't decide, start here], all of which are available from the list of databases you will find when you click "Select resource collections" on the Virtual Library's homepage. You may also try browsing current newspapers or magazines to get ideas for a topic.

A topic may be difficult to research if it is too broad or too narrow. If your topic is broad, you may **limit** it by geographic region, by culture, by time frame, by population group, or by some other element. (Guideline: Use the broader topic to search the online catalog; the narrower topic/keywords to search periodical databases.)

Write your topic here: \_\_\_\_\_

As you research your topic, it may be useful to think of other keywords a writer would use to describe your topic, for example, cyber-crime may also be described as hacking, internet crime or computer crime.

Additional keywords for your topic: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Learn to "browse" the reference collection by LC classification to find background information on your topic. (Consider completing IvyTILT module 1.)

The reference books are arranged by subject using the Library of Congress classification system. Using the LC guide posted in the library, or at this link: <http://www.ivytech.edu/library/muncie/shafer/resources/locguide.PDF>, find the letters that most closely fit your topic and then go to the corresponding Reference Shelves. If you find one book, similar books will likely be close by. Keep in mind, **reference books** are to be used **in the library** and cannot be checked out.

Write the title of the book here: \_\_\_\_\_

Write the "call number" [on the book's spine] here: \_\_\_\_\_

Find an article or piece of information in the reference book you have chosen that is particularly useful. You may need to look in the index or table of contents to locate something related to your topic.

Does this information help you better define your topic? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ How? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Learn to find books using the Ivy Tech online catalog (IvyCat). (You may find IvyTILT Module 3 helpful.)

The online catalog lists all the books and other resources available at all Ivy Tech libraries in Indiana, with their call numbers and locations. (You may limit your search to your campus library, or choose to search all locations if you are interested in borrowing books from other Ivy Tech libraries—ask us about Interlibrary Loan.)

To search for books by subject, title or author, **click "Search IvyCat" on the Virtual Library home page.** For this assignment, you will need to limit the search to your campus (click "Limits," under "Location," select your campus location, click "Set Limits").

Enter keywords that describe your topic in the second text entry box to find a relevant book in the library. In this case, you will be searching in "Keyword Anywhere"--click **Search**.

The computer will show you every book in your campus library, including online books, which contain your search words in the record of the book. The record of the book will contain the title, author, subjects the book is listed under and other descriptions of the book.

Keep scrolling down or click *Next* at the top or bottom of the page until you find a book that:

- 1) is relevant to your topic,
- 2) is not an online book (if you are only getting online books, please ask for help in limiting your search to exclude ebooks--or search with NOT "click here" in keyword anywhere), and
- 3) is not checked out (this will be indicated by the words "Not charged" on the results page, or "Available" on the record page).

Title \_\_\_\_\_  
Author \_\_\_\_\_  
Call number (all letters and numbers) \_\_\_\_\_  
Year \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g., General Collection)

Searching for books is also done by title or author, but for this assignment, we are researching a topic, and don't know authors or titles to look for yet.

4. Learn to find a book in the library using an LC call number.

A call number is the address of a book on the shelf. Like the Reference books, books in the **General Collection Stacks** (on the shelves) are arranged by subject using Library of Congress call numbers. Books shelved in the General Collection can usually be checked out (i.e., borrowed).

Using the call number you wrote down in Part 3, find the book on the shelf. Ask for assistance if you cannot find the book. Once you find the book, choose the book next to that book on the shelf and write the information for that book as follows:

Title \_\_\_\_\_  
Call number (all letters and numbers) \_\_\_\_\_  
Does this book appear to be on your topic? \_\_\_\_\_  
(If the library didn't have very many books on your topic, it may not be, but in a larger library, very likely would be on your topic.)

5. Learn to find magazine, journal and newspaper articles using online databases. (See IvyTILT module 4.)

Online article databases are used to find articles published in magazines, journals or newspapers (periodicals). Databases may sometimes be referred to as periodical indexes, abstracts, databases or “full text” databases. Databases may contain three types of records for articles:

Citations: information used to locate the article in print (such as journal title and date)

Abstracts: summaries of the articles with a citation

Full text: the complete article with a citation and sometimes an abstract

If an article is NOT available “full text” in the database, it may be available in a print periodical at your library or from another library through Interlibrary Loan (ILL).

EBSCOhost and ProQuest are examples of databases that Region 6 libraries subscribe to, meaning the library pays for students to have access to these databases. If you try to access these databases from home, you will be asked for a username and password, which are the same as your Campus Pipeline username and password. For this exercise, use ProQuest, but keep in mind that there are other databases available and explore them for future research assignments.

To search for articles on your topic, click **ProQuest** on the Virtual Library homepage (under the “Select resource collections” listing). Next, enter keywords that describe your topic in the text entry box and press the Search button. When entering your search terms, you may want to use some of the following electronic search tips:

### **Boolean logic**

Boolean logic operators enable better search results by combining search terms. The principal Boolean operators are: AND, OR, and NOT. (These options are often available in dropdown boxes, or other selection tool, on a Guided Search or Advanced Search screen. They can be typed in most Basic search screens.)

Use AND to combine different concepts together. This will reduce search results.

Example: adolescents AND volunteers

Use OR to gather references that use similar terms or synonyms. This will increase search results.

Example: adolescents OR teenagers OR young adults




Use NOT to exclude terms. Use this sparingly as it may remove useful search results.

Example: volunteers NOT elderly

### **Phrase or Adjacency Searching**

Some databases and search engines will enable you to search for an exact phrase or words in the same sentence or paragraph (proximity search). Keep in mind, the computer will search for the terms exactly as they are entered. (Some databases accept quotes, others allow you to select “exact phrase.”)

Example: Entering “teenage volunteers” may miss a source about adolescent voluntarism.

Once you are satisfied with your search results, find an article on your topic that is available full text. ProQuest uses picture icons (  or  ) before the article title to indicate when Full Text is available, which follow this icon for citations  (or if you limit your search to full text articles, the Full Text icon should appear for each title in your result list). Other databases, such as EBSCOHost, will note **HTML Full Text** or **PDF Full Text** if the complete article is available (and when given a choice, choose HTML which will load and print faster; PDF files are photo images of the page as it appears in the print publication). Click on the title of any article to view the complete article.

Title (of the article) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Source (name of magazine/journal): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Volume: \_\_\_\_\_ Issue: \_\_\_\_\_ Pages: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Author/s (there may not be any listed.) \_\_\_\_\_

Note: You may print, email or save articles using buttons located at the bottom or top of the articles.

6. In general, “scholarly” articles are viewed as having more authority. Articles from the “popular” press are viewed as having less credibility. This is why instructors may request that students find scholarly (or “academic,” or “peer-reviewed”) journal articles, rather than popular magazine articles, for their research sources. Some factors that help determine whether a publication is scholarly or popular are shown in this chart:

<b>Defining Criteria</b>	<b>Scholarly</b>	<b>Popular</b>
Author	scholar, noted professional or expert (for example, Dr. or Ph.D.)	staff writer (or journalist) or not name listed at all
Audience	specialized field	general
Language	advanced reading level; specialized vocabulary	basic reading level
Purpose	discusses a specific topic	current events, general interest stories
Review	Articles are reviewed by peers; editorial board is comprised of scholars in the field.	Editor or editorial board are members of the magazine’s staff.
Sources	List of references is included at the end of each article.	Articles rarely include references.
Appearance when in print	Often have “Journal” or “Review” in title; few ads or photos	Colorful, with lots of advertising
Examples	<i>Harvard Business Review, Lancet, RN, Journal of Blacks in Higher Education</i>	<i>People, Cooking Light, US News &amp; World Report, Sports Illustrated, National Enquirer, Time</i>

Is the article you found for question 5, scholarly or popular? What factors helped you determine that?

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7. Learn to find web information using an Internet search engine. (See IvyTILT module 5.)

Internet search engines are another tool available to help researchers locate freely accessible web information on a specific topic. Internet search engines will generally not find library books or journal articles, even though these are accessible from the Web. To find books, use the library catalog; to find articles, use article databases.

The search process using a search engine is very similar to searching the article databases from the library homepage. Type in the following website address in the address box at the top of your screen: [www.google.com](http://www.google.com). When Google's page appears, enter keywords that describe your topic in the text entry box and press enter.

How many websites did your search retrieve? \_\_\_\_\_

You may broaden or narrow your search using Boolean logic and phrase searching in most search engines (see part 5). Read the search tips or help screens of the search engine for examples.

8. One of the biggest issues in using an Internet source is the credibility of the website, since anyone can publish information on the Internet and many of the sites are not edited. Choose a site from your search in part 7 that looks relevant to your topic and answer the following questions:

What is the "domain" in the address of the site? \_\_\_\_\_  
.gov=government, .com=commercial, .edu=education, .org=nonprofit organization, etc.

Can you find an author (or organization) that created this site? (hint: you may have to go to that site's homepage. There is usually a "home" button on your site to get to the original homepage)  
\_\_\_\_\_

What is the purpose of this site? (to amuse, to sell, to instruct ...)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Is there a list of references (or works cited) on this site? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the date the site was last updated? (Hint: If not indicated on the page, right click on the page, choose "properties" and check to see when modified) \_\_\_\_\_

Based on the above questions, do you think this site credible? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Why or why not?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Would you use this site in a research paper? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Why or why not?  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. Once you have found all the resources you will need for a research project, it is important to correctly cite those resources in a list at the end of your paper to avoid plagiarism. Here are a few examples of MLA citations, the citation style many literature and social studies instructors require, and APA citations, the style most sciences use: [For other examples, see this online resource found in the Pursue it: section of the Virtual Library: [Ivy Tech Citation Handbook: Citing sources with MLA & APA.](#)]

**MLA -- Book with two authors:**

Howe, Russell W., and Sarah Hays Trott. American Mosaic: Multicultural Readings in Context. Boston: Houghton, 1991.

**APA -- Book with two authors:**

Howe, R., & Trott, S. (1991). American mosaic: Multicultural readings in context. Boston: Houghton.

**MLA -- Journal article:**

Render, Ralf, et al. "Effect of Age on Excess Mortality in Obesity." The Journal of the American Medical Association 281.16 (1999): 1498-1504.

**APA -- Journal article:**

Render, R., Jockel, K. H., Trautner, C., Spraul, M., & Berger M. (1999). Effect of age on excess mortality in obesity. The Journal of the American Medical Association 281(16), 1498-1504.

**MLA -- Article from an online database [note: many databases will tell you how an article should be cited]:**

Bohacz, Ray T. "Tunin' TPI." Hot Rod June 2000: 106. ProQuest. 16 June 2000  
<<http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?ReqType=301&UserId=IPAuto&Passwd=IPAuto&JSEnabled=1&TS=961180802>>.

**APA -- Article from on online database [note: many databases will tell you how an article should be cited]:**

Bohacz, R. (2000, June) Tunin' TPI. Hot Rod, 53(6), 106. {Online: ProQuest}. Available: <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?ReqType=301&UserId=IPAuto&Passwd=IPAuto&JSEnabled=1&TS=961180802> (2000, June 16).

**MLA -- Web document:**

Use the same MLA format that you would use for print sources (books, journals, popular magazines) with the additional information below:

MLA Citation Format for Print Source. Date of Access. <URL>.

**APA -- Web document:**

Use the same APA format that you would use for print sources (books, journals, popular magazines) with the additional information below:

APA Citation Format for Print Source. {Online}. Available: URL. {Date of Access}.

**Advice for URLs (web site addresses):**

Use the URL (Uniform Resource Locator) as it appears in the Address Field on the computer screen; it should begin with "http:" and may continue for several lines. If you must break a URL address, break it after a slash (if possible) and do not add hyphens. The addresses may change as the databases are updated.

For in-text citations, use the original page numbers, the page numbers on the computer print-outs, or the paragraph number. Check with your instructor.

**Web Citations in Text**

To cite specific parts of a Web document, indicate the chapter, figure, table, or equation as appropriate.

To cite an entire Web site (but not a specific document on the site), it's sufficient to give the address of the site in the text. No reference entry is needed.

Choose any one of the resources you found in the above questions and write an MLA or APA citation for it here:

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You may ask a librarian for help, or you may find the MLA or APA handbooks on the Reference shelves, or citation guides available online through IvyLynks (link on Virtual Library page). You may find IvyTILT module 6 helpful.