

Keys to Research

To access our databases, go to: <http://depts.surry.edu/lrc/sources.html>
Use the **NEW** Database Subject Guide
(http://depts.surry.edu/lrc/guides/db_subjects.html)
to narrow your database choices.



I have chosen my database, now how do I search?

You first have to decide what starting terms you are going to use when searching. We call all of these terms (subjects/keywords/descriptors/etc.) **working vocabulary**. Think of your major term(s) as the trunk of a tree. You can then:

- **Limit** using the limiters in an individual database or
- Add **perspective** by narrowing your original term(s) as a tree does with branches. (E.g. global warming + climate change + united states)
- Remember to use the **Search Tips** located on the database pages to help identify how to combine words, use phrases, where to look for these term(s) in the document, etc.
 1. Using the **Advanced Search** mode will allow you to insert multiple words in a box as a phrase. (Most of our databases default to this.)
 2. Using an * at the end of a word will generally allow for plurals and multiply endings. You will be using a **root** word to search. (e.g. nurs*)
 3. If you are searching on the **Internet**, you might try using quote marks "" to contain words as a phrase.
- As you search in multiple databases, remember to collect additional working vocabulary from the database suggestions, from the citations, from the abstracts, from the full text. You will continually be redefining your search.



I have results, now what?

The next step, after identifying your research or sources, is to evaluate them in terms of:

- Do they match your hypothesis/thesis statement/what you are looking for?
- Read through your results. Check to see if you can narrow your results to academic journals or magazines, or newspapers or other items. If you can, choose the best resources for your research.
- Read through the summaries/abstracts for relevancy.
- If you do not find what you are looking for, gather additional working vocabulary and click on **refine search** to change some of your original search terms.
- If you are using Internet sources, you must evaluate them in terms of authorship, accuracy, currency, etc. Use the following link for sample questions to ask yourself:
<http://www.wcu.edu/library/researchref/help/wwwevaluate.htm>
- Use the following form to turn in with your paper to validate your web site choices: [Web Page Evaluation Check List](#).



I have identified some great articles, how do I save/email/print them?

Most databases allow users to “collect” their research. Some databases have folders for collecting your results. Some folders save for a set amount of time, others only for that session.

- Use **INTERNAL** keys/buttons to save/print/email articles.
- Articles appear as html or Text +graphics OR as a pdf
 1. html or Text + graphics forms are the written word.
 2. The pdf form appears like the print version with color, charts, graphs, and pictures.
- You **MUST** remember to collect your citation information as you print. Make sure that your printout contains the basics, including the database you consulted for your results.
- Consult and get familiar with **citation** examples, particularly MLA & APA, which are found through the following link: [Citing & Writing](#). These guides follow the approved from of the individual associations/organizations and Surry CC standards.