



# Writing a Research Paper

1. **Pick a topic** – use your textbook, syllabus, flip through books and websites on the subject, the news, or ask your instructor for help
2. **Think of synonyms** – think of different words or phrases to represent your topic. Search using different synonyms to get information from different perspectives. For example: for the word ‘schools’ also try education, learning centers, training, private schools, public schools, college, university, or teaching
3. **Gather factual data and background information**

Use reference books like encyclopedias, handbooks, and dictionaries to gather background information

Information in reference books is put together according to broad subject areas. Therefore, if your topic is:

Eating disorder	find an encyclopedia for psychology or Medicine
Filibuster	find a dictionary of political science
Randolph Hearst	find a biographical encyclopedia
Jim Crow Laws	find an encyclopedia of African-American History

Reference books will provide the Who, What, When, and Where of your subject

Sample Titles include: *Encyclopedia of Sociology*, *Physician’s Desk Reference*

4. **Gather information from different sources: books, articles, Internet**

## Finding Books:

Savannah Tech’s online catalog [www.youseemore.com/savannahtech](http://www.youseemore.com/savannahtech) allows you to locate books using author, title, subject, or keyword information.

Keyword searching is the most comprehensive way to search our catalog meaning it will give the greatest number of results because it locates every record with the keyword(s) entered (Tip: fewer keywords are better when searching the online catalog and databases) Electronic books titled ‘Electronic Resources’ are also available through the online catalog.

## **Finding Articles:**

Articles in magazines, journals, and newspapers usually:

- are more specific and focused than books
- are more current
- present interpretations and answer the 'why' parts of questions
- are the most common method of presenting research findings

Use the Georgia Library Learning Online (GALILEO) database collection @ [www.galileo.usg.edu](http://www.galileo.usg.edu). The password needed for off-campus access can be obtained from the library.

## **Internet**

Methods to find *useful* web sites:

1. Use a directory site which lists and organizes Web sites by subject  
Examples: [www.ipl.org](http://www.ipl.org) (Internet Public Library) or [www.digital-librarian.com](http://www.digital-librarian.com)
2. Use sites with search tools that allow you to search for individual words or phrases of your choice  
Examples: [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) or [www.altavista.com](http://www.altavista.com)

### **5. Evaluate what you find. Some criteria to evaluate information include:**

- a. Accuracy – Is the source and author identified or cited?
- b. Authority – Does the author, publisher, or source seem credible or reputable?
- c. Objectivity – Can you detect a bias? Does it only advocate one side of the issue?
- d. Currency – Is the content up-to-date? Are publication dates available?
- e. Coverage – Is the topic covered in depth? Is it missing an important element of the issue?

**Please be sure to speak with the Librarian if you have any questions or need further assistance!**