

Quick Guide :: 5 STEPS TO BETTER LIBRARY RESEARCH

1. Get Started

Start by choosing a broad topic:

2. Gather Background Information

Before you begin your research, get background information on your topic. This will save you time and prevent frustration!

Start by looking in:

- : Encyclopedias
- : Dictionaries
- : Class textbooks

Note: These resources can often provide you with a list of books and articles on your topic.

3. Narrow your Topic

When writing a term paper, it is critical to choose a topic that is not too broad. Narrow the focus of your topic, limit by:

LIMITERS

Time:

Place:

Person or group:

Aspect:

Other Limiters:

Note: Choose at least 3 limiters using the above examples, or come up with your own.

4. Form a Search Question

Now that you have your topic narrowed, it is useful to phrase it in the form of a question.

This helps you to:

- : Keep your research focused
- : Choose resources that provide answers
- : Develop a thesis statement

Question:

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5. Create a Search Term List

The last step is to create a list of search terms to use when searching for books and articles with the library's electronic catalogs and databases.

A. Identify the key terms and concepts in your research question.

B. Choose related terms for your key concepts.

Key Concepts

Related Terms

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:: Example Topic

1. Topic: IMMIGRATION

2. Gather Background Information

3. Limiters:

TimeCurrent, 1980->

PlaceUnited States

Person/GroupImmigrants

AspectHigher education

4. Search Question:

How has higher education contributed to the success of immigrants in the United States?

5. Search Term List:

Key Concepts

Related Terms

Higher educationcollege, university

Successstatus, wealth

Immigrants:migrants, aliens,

Chicanos, Cubans