DEFINE your topic

1. Sometimes finding a good topic can be the hardest first step when it comes to research. If you’re having a hard time try browsing Opposing Viewpoints or CQ Researcher (located under Controversial Issues on the database page).

   What is your general topic: _________________________________________ (video games)

2. Your next step will be to refine your topic so it’s a little more research friendly. Try brainstorming ideas using the concept map below.

   Practice Example:

   Beverly Hillbillies
   Stereotype
   pop culture
   redneck
   Appalachian culture
   music
   Folk art

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3. Refined topic: _______________________________________________________________

   Ex. Is pop culture to blame for the hillbilly stereotype?

   (Notice that this is in the form of a question. Although I may already have my own opinion about this topic it’s important that I start my research process open minded and curious about my topic. Otherwise you risk falling prey to confirmation bias)

4. Based on what you know so far, who would you consider to be knowledgeable or most expert in this topic? (sociologists, historians)

FIND Information

Keywords are very important when it comes to doing research. The better the keywords or combination of keywords, the better your search results will be.

Now that you have a more refined topic and have brainstormed using the concept map, identify some good keyword combination you can use to search a database:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept 1</th>
<th>Concept 2</th>
<th>Concept 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hillbilly</td>
<td>stereotype</td>
<td>pop culture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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SEARCH a databases:

Go to Search Almost Everything database located on the library homepage: www.sunyjefferson.edu/academics/library

1) Type in the keyword combination you created above. How many results did you get? __________

2) Use the database filters/limiters to refine your list of results to only magazine articles. How many results did you get now? _____

3) Find an article that looks interesting to you. Select the title so you can view the record. In the space below, list the subject headings/terms provided in the record.
LIBRARY INSTRUCTION WORKSHEET

4) How can subject headings/terms found in the record help you with your research?

Now go back to www.sunyjefferson.edu/academics/library and select the Articles-JCC Database link on the left. Choose a specialized/subject database to do a search in using the same keywords as before.

1) Provide the name of the database you choose to search in? ____________________________
2) How many results did you get when you did your keyword search? ______________________
3) How was searching in this databases different from Search Almost Everything?

SEARCH Google

Like our library databases, Google also has tools like filters to help you find information.

1) Domain search: Type in your keyword combination, then add site:edu. So it will look like this:

   ![Google search example](https://example.com)

   hillbilly stereotypes site:edu

2) Use Google Scholar as a discovery tool for our JCC Library database:
   a. Go to https://scholar.google.com/. Select Settings located at the top menu bar.
   b. Select Library Links on the left menu. On the next page you will be provided with a menu bar. Type in our college name: Jefferson Community College. When it locates it, make sure the box is checked. Then select Save.
   c. Now when you do a search in Google Scholar, it will tag any articles it finds that can be found in our JCC Library databases with this: Find it! @JCC

Step 3: EVALUATE Information

Regardless of what kind of information you have found, you should always evaluate it using the following criteria:

1) Authority
   a. Who is the author? _______________________
   b. Can you identify their expertise? If so, what is it? ________________________________

2) Accuracy
   a. Did they cite experts, data or factual information in their article? __________________
   b. If so, are you able to trace that information back to its source? ______________________

3) Objectivity

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a. If the article focuses on a controversial topic, are both sides of the argument represented evenly?

b. Can you sense of what the purpose of the article is? Are they trying to inform? Persuade? Rant? ________________________________

4) Currency
   a. When was the article written?
   b. If the article has cited facts, statistics or research, how recent are they?