The Research Process
Research is a process made up of many small steps.

What Next?

Steps in the Research Process

1. Determine the materials you will need.
2. Develop a research strategy.
3. Conduct searches for information.
4. Evaluate the resources that you find.
5. Incorporate and cite the information you use.
1. Determining the Materials You Will Need

- What is the purpose of your assignment?
- Instructors use words like **argue**, **analyze**, **compare**, or **describe** to guide your approach to a topic. For example, an assignment that asks you to **argue** requires you to take a position on an issue or idea and support your position with research.
- What do you have to do in your paper?
1. Determining the Materials You Will Need

Which Library Resources?

Books
NCLIVE-Magazines
Opposing Viewpoints Database
Internet- Web Sites
Newspapers
1. Determining the Materials You Will Need

Books

Books are important resources for research.
• Controversial topics are covered in these book series:

At Issue
Compact Research
Contemporary Issues
Contemporary Issues Companion
Current Controversies
Opposing Viewpoints Series

Use the Online Catalog to locate Books
1. Determining the Materials You Will Need

Databases: Opposing Viewpoints and NCLive

- **Opposing Viewpoints** offers easy access to good information on popular and social science topics. It includes statistics, magazine articles, newspaper articles and websites. It is a library of topics featuring the facts, the arguments, the pros, the cons and the references to support each perspective.

- **NCLIVE** is a group of databases that provide access to articles from over 9,000 newspapers, journals, magazines and encyclopedias, indexing for over 20,000 periodical titles and access to over 22,000 electronic books.
1. Determining the Materials You Will Need

The Internet

• The Internet can be a valuable resource if used carefully.
• Keep in mind that anyone can publish anything on the Internet.
• It is your responsibility to evaluate the authority, currency, and bias of each source.
2. Develop a research strategy

Define or narrow your topic:
• Break down the main concept into smaller concepts and think of keywords.
• If your topic is “Does watching TV cause violence?,” break down your idea into at least two concepts.
  • CONCEPT 1 ➔ Media
  • CONCEPT 2 ➔ Violence
2. Develop a research strategy

Think of Synonyms

Often, there is more than one word that you can use to search for your topic

• CONCEPT 1 - media
• Synonyms - television, mass media movies, mass communications
• CONCEPT 2 - violence
• Synonyms - riots, aggression, violent behavior
3. Conducting searches for information

Boolean Searching

Examples for catalog, databases, & Internet:

- Television and violence
- Media and violence
- Violence and mass media
- Advertising and violence
- Rap music and violence
- Or children and violence and effects

- You may have to try many combinations to find the results that you need; you do not need to capitalize.
3. Conducting searches for information

- Do not search using long phrases, such as
- How does advertising cause violence?
- Should cell phones be banned while driving?
- Does rap music affect the behavior of teenagers in America?

- REMEMBER --- Use **KEYWORDS** and combine them using **- AND -**
3. Conducting searches for information

- Use the same strategy to search for information in the following areas:
  - Library catalog
  - Databases
  - Internet

- Scan all results to determine which resources are the most relevant to your assignment.
4. Evaluate your resources

- You will find a wealth of information about your topic using the resources we’ve discussed. You must be able to evaluate the quality and accuracy of your sources by using the following criteria:
  - **Authority**—Who provided the information? Who sponsors this website?
  - **Currency**—Is there a date on the page? Is it recent enough to be relevant?
  - **Bias**—Does this website have a point of view? Is it designed to influence your opinion?
  - Remember, your instructor may not accept information from sources that do not meet the criteria listed above.
5. Citing Sources

• Always check with your professor for instructions on the proper citation format.

• Most databases offer a citation generator. It is your responsibility to format the citation according to the appropriate style manual.

• citationmachine.net is available as a tool to assist you with your bibliography.
Moving on to the search process

• Now we are going to show you how to conduct searches using the library catalog, databases, and the Internet.

• Don’t forget that the librarians are always available to help you with your research.