Goals: At the end of our class time you will:
  • Have identified 3 potential subtopics for your research project
  • Be able to determine whether a source you find is authoritative & appropriate

Activities:

1. Write Topic: [use topic provided by professor or librarian if you haven't found one yet]

2. a. Circle/underline your topic's main concepts. Write these concepts in grey boxes below.
   b. Create a list of keywords for each concept, beyond the exact words in your topic, in the space below.

Tips: Look for keywords in books: table of contents, index, chapter titles, headings, & graphs.
Find more keywords in articles: abstracts & subject headings.

Key Concepts:

3. Create a “search string” using at least 2 of the keywords you wrote above.
4. Use your search string to do a search in Research Starter [hoover.mcdaniel.edu].
I.D. quality sources for your research [use the Guide to Evaluating Sources worksheet].
Record the titles & author (if there are multiple authors, use the first one) for at least 3 promising findings.

1. ..........................................................................................................................

2. ..........................................................................................................................

3. ..........................................................................................................................

Found nothing useful? Try 2 of the following tips:

• Change words. Search broad, general words 1st or 1 word/concept. Then add more words & filters to narrow results.

• Use the word OR between similar words to increase results. Example: imagery OR symbolism

• Use an asterisk (*) after the root of the word to increase results. Example: peace* = peaceful, peacemaker, peacemaking, etc.

• Use the word AND between concepts to focus (& decrease) results: Example: imagery AND medieval

• Use parentheses (x) to group concepts together Example: (dog OR canine OR pooch) AND species

• Use quotation marks (“x y”) around words you want to keep together & in the same order. Examples: “academy awards” “American Astronomical Society”

• Cut unwanted information with filters: dates, language, publication type, etc.

5. What are your next steps towards completing your research?

Need more help? Make an appointment with a librarian! https://cal.hoover.mcdaniel.edu/appointments/