

Bromfield Library
Library Research Steps

Bromfield Library Web Site:<http://library.mansfield.ohio-state.edu>

OhioLINK Web Site:<http://www.ohiolink.edu>

Choose your Topic

Make sure it is not too narrow or too broad. You will usually fine-tune your topic after you start doing your research.

Find Background Information on your Topic

The **Reference Section** of the Library includes **subject encyclopedias, handbooks,** and other **reference books** that can provide an overview of your topic or provide you with background information. Copies of the Library of Congress Classification ***Browser's Guide*** can be found near the Reference Desk. This will guide you to the sections of the collection that have materials in your subject area.

You can also do a **Keyword Search** in the ***OSCAR Library Catalog*** to find encyclopedias and handbooks. Type a word or phrase that sums up the main concept relating to your topic and combine it with the word "encyclopedia" or "handbook". You will need to think about the **broad subject area** when doing this. In other words, there is probably not an encyclopedia of marijuana, but there is an encyclopedia of drugs and alcohol.

EXAMPLE: environment and handbook alcohol and encyclopedia
 education and encyclopedia

Identify Key Concepts

Choose the **main ideas** related to your topic and then think of possible **synonyms** and **antonyms** for those concepts.

TOPIC: Automobile companies should be required to increase the fuel efficiency of their vehicles.

Concept 1: automobile companies

Synonyms: auto industry automobile manufacturers automobiles trucks

Concept 2: fuel efficiency

Synonyms: gas mileage fuel gas guzzler

Concept 3: standards

Synonyms: regulations legislation

Use **truncation** to give you multiple endings for words. OSU and OhioLINK library catalogs and the EBSCOhost databases use the **asterisk "*"**. Many OhioLINK databases use the **dollar sign "\$"**.

EX: manufactur* or **manufactur\$** gives you manufacturer, manufacturers, manufacturing
regulat* or **regulat\$** gives you regulate, regulation, regulations, regulatory

Find Books in the OSCAR Catalog or OhioLINK Catalog

From the Library's home page, choose **OSCAR Catalog**. Then choose OhioLINK Catalog from the right-hand menu. Do a **Keyword Search** using your Key Concepts. Combine words using **Boolean Logic**.

Connect the terms using the word **OR** to enter synonyms and to expand your results.
(auto industry) **or** (car manufactur*) cars **or** trucks **or** automobiles

Connect the terms using the word **AND** if you want the search to be narrower.
(auto industry) **and** (fuel efficien*) (cars or automobile*) **and** fuel **and** standard*

Look at the catalog record for a book and see what **subjects** are being used. Do a **Subject Search** if you think that will be helpful or do another word search using those subject terms.

OhioLINK lets you order books directly from over 80 Ohio academic libraries **IF** you are currently registered in the Library to check out books.

Look for Articles on your Topic

Click on **Other Research Databases** from the Library's Web site and select the database that you want to use. Databases will lead you to **abstracts** (summaries) or the **full-text** of articles, book reviews, papers and reports. Search using the **key concepts** for your topic. General databases that may be helpful include:

Academic Search Premier

Mix of scholarly and general interest articles; some are full-text and some are not.

Electronic Journal Center (EJC)

Provides access to full-text articles from over 3000 **scholarly** journals.

Lexis-Nexis Academic

Offers access to the full-text of newspaper articles and newsletters.

NOTE: If the article is not available in full-text and cannot be found in the Bromfield Library you will need to submit an **Interlibrary Loan** request so that the Library can get the article for you. Forms are available under **Forms and User Guides** on the library home page. Allow 4-8 days to get the article.

Use the Internet to Find Web Sites Related to your Topic

Click on **WWW Sources** from the OSU/OhioLINK page for a list of search engines. **Google** (<http://www.google.com>) is a good search engine to use; though there are many others. The domain name included in the **Web address (URL)** will sometimes give you clues to the source of the information. Some of the domain names include:

- .edu** educational institution (college, university) -- These sites include a wide range of content including research papers, statistics, and tutorials, as well as student-created Web sites or papers
- .gov** government agency -- Generally reliable sources of information; good sources for statistics
- .org** association or organization -- Information may be biased toward organization's mission/goals
- .com** company or commercial enterprise -- These sites usually want to sell you something.

You **MUST** use extra caution in evaluating Web sites since these are not monitored or edited for content, accuracy or currency.