

Azusa Pacific University Libraries

Research Strategies Step-by-Step

Objective: This checklist will help you get started with the research process and organize your results in order to manage the many steps involved in doing research.

Research Strategies Checklist

Research is a complex and lengthy process, but the library and its resources can help. Librarians are always available to consult with you. In addition, you can find books, articles (print or online), databases, and Internet resources via the library's web site: <http://www.apu.edu/library/>

Hint: Need help choosing a topic? Try one of these sources:

Title	Location
<i>Encyclopaedia Britannica Online</i> (Browse by subject)	Library web site >> Online Resources - All Databases >> Choose by database name
<i>CQ Press Electronic Reference Library</i> (Enter <i>CQ Researcher</i> , Browse by Topic)	
<i>APU Library Catalog</i> or <i>LINK+</i> (Do a Subject or Keyword Search)	
<i>ProQuest Databases</i> (Click on Topic Guide)	

1. What is your topic? _____

2. Identify the details of the assignment:

What type of assignment is it?	Research paper Essay Opinion paper Review Other _____
How long does your paper need to be?	
What type(s) of information do you need?	Statistics Internet sources Books Articles Multimedia (visual, sound) Other _____
Do you need current or historical sources? Both?	

3. What is the research question you plan to answer? (**Hint:** This will be your thesis). _____

4. What are the main concepts you need to search for? (**Hint:** You can identify the main concepts by looking at your research question).

5. Identify related terms (keywords) for each of the main concepts listed in #4.

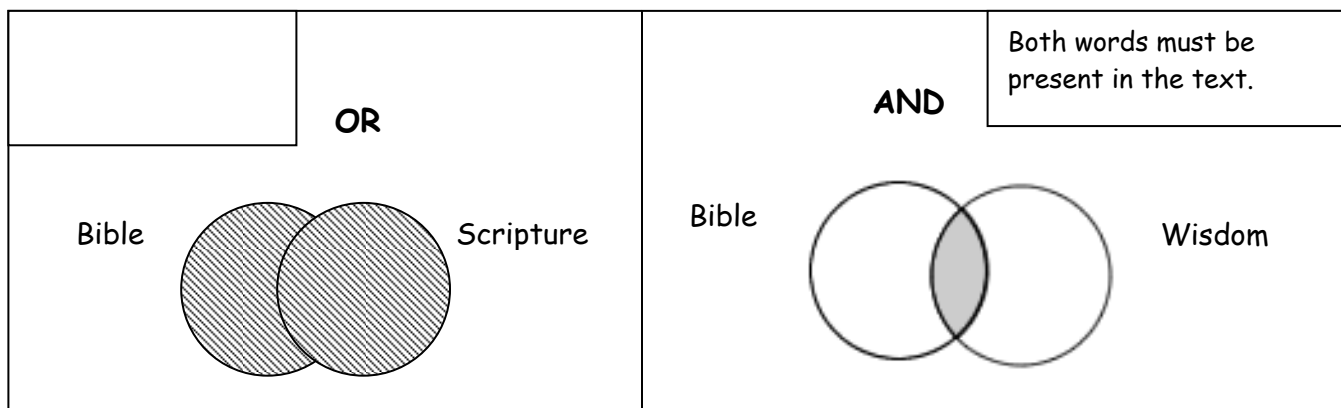
6. Identify the most appropriate library databases for your topic. Explore the Online Resources - All Databases page (<http://www.apu.edu/library/apuresources/onlineresources/>) for descriptions of the various resources.

What databases look most relevant to your topic?

7. Search using the main concepts and keywords you identified in #4 and #5. If you find too many or too few results, you may need to narrow or broaden your search. Use Boolean terms (OR, AND) to help you narrow or broaden.

OR = similar concepts; broader search

AND = dissimilar terms which you want to combine; narrower search



8. Keep a log of all the searches you have tried so you don't repeat them. Example:

Database Used	Search terms	Results
ProQuest	business ethics (subject search)	11,000+
ProQuest	business ethics and employees (subject search)	267
Academic Search Elite	business ethics and employees (subject search)	64
netLibrary	business ethics (keyword search)	14

9. At this point, you may find it necessary to revise your research question/thesis based on the searches you have tried. If you are finding too much information on your topic, pick one aspect of that topic to focus on. If you are not finding any information on your topic, choose a broader topic.

10. Collect the necessary information for your Works Cited or Bibliography.

Resource	General Information Needed	What to Print
Book	Author, Title, Date, Publisher, Place of Publication	Record from Library Catalog
Article	Author, Article Title, Journal Name, Volume, Issue, Date, Page Numbers	Record from Database or First Page of Full-text Article
Web Site or Web Page	Author, Page Title, Publisher, Date, URL (Web Address), Date the page was accessed	First page of the Web Site