NAVIGATING A GALAXY OF INFORMATION

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Gulfar Ergin/Unsplash


Lee Chinyama/Unsplash


Markus Spiske/Unsplash

FINDING SOURCES

Gabriel Sollman/Unsplash

12 Photo Story/Unsplash

TYPES OF SOURCES

- Primary
  - Original object or document
  - Examples
    - Photo
    - Journal/diary/autobiography
    - Experimental data
    - Artifact
- Secondary
  - Anything written about a primary source (includes author's point of view)
  - Examples
    - Biography
    - Newspaper article – but the quotes and eyewitness accounts are primary sources

WHERE TO FIND FREE INFORMATION

- The internet!
  - More on evaluating sources later
- Libraries
  - Public
  - Academic
- Museums
  - Make sure to ask about collections that are *not* on display!
- Historical societies

PUBLIC LIBRARY

- Books
  - Interlibrary loan – local, colleges/universities, out of state
  - E-books
- Periodicals
  - Including back issues and digital edition
- Online resources – some available only in the library
- Click on the "research" tab on your library's website

ADDITIONAL SERVICES

- Librarian
  - They love to help you problem-solve!
  - Give them specifics of your project + research already done
  - Referral to other libraries with different services
- Faxing, copying, scanning
- WorldCat (international library catalog)
- CLIO (interstate interlibrary loan)
  - Articles from anywhere in the world (pdf)
  - Books by mail
- Museum passes
- Local history room
- Microfiche (yup, really!)
- Library of Things

Make sure you have a card in good standing at your local library!

ACADEMIC LIBRARY
(COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY)

- Books
  - Interlibrary loan
- Periodicals (including scholarly journals)
- Special collections
- Archives
- Rare books
- Specialized libraries
- Media services
- Online resources
- Assignment #2: what is your local college's policy on public access?

Most college libraries will allow you to use their services and books on-site.
Many will charge a small fee for a limited-term library card.

OTHER NOTABLE LIBRARIES

- Library of Congress
- Smithsonian Libraries
- New York Public Library Digital Collections

OPEN ACCESS

- Open access books
  - Project Gutenberg (books with expired copyright)
  - Hathi Project
  - Google Books (sort of)
- ProQuest - Clearing house for open-access scholarly journals
- Openstax.org – free, peer-reviewed textbooks, written by experts
- arXive.org – preprints of scientific papers
  - Physics (including astronomy)
  - Math
  - Quantitative biology
  - Computer science
  - Quantitative finance & economics
  - Statistics
  - Electrical engineering & systems science

THE INTERNET

- Google
  - Keyword search
    - Refine and repeat
  - Natural language search
    - Less reliable due to interpretation

- Wikipedia
  - Good for background and brainstorming
  - More reliable for non-controversial subjects
  - In general: don't use Wikipedia as a source—click on **their** sources
- Professional Organizations
- National Labs
- Websites of museums, historical societies, *etc*.
- College/University departments and news sites
- Wayback Machine internet archive: https://archive.org/web/

HOW RELIABLE IS YOUR SOURCE?

- Who is the author?
  - Click on "about"
  - Google anything unfamiliar
  - If you don't know who wrote it, don't use it!
- Are they an expert?
- What's their education/background?
- Do they have an agenda?
- Beware of bad spelling, bad grammar, random punctuation, weird word choice, SHOUTING!!!! !
  - Social media is not a research site, even if the author is reliable
- Use biased sources, but with caution

HOW TO READ A SCHOLARLY ARTICLE

- Use structure to your advantage
- Find a popular article about the same topic
  - Magazine/online article
  - Current events sites
  - University or organization news website
- Use Wikipedia to look up any terms you don't understand
- If at first you don't succeed… Read it again! (and again)
  - But it's also okay to give up

SCIENTIFIC ARTICLE STRUCTURE (VARIES BY FIELD)

- Title – including author contact information and keywords
- Abstract – summary (like jacket copy, but gives away the ending)
- Introduction
- Background
- Experimental/Methods/Observations
- Results
- Discussion
- Conclusion/Summary
- References
- Appendices

Scientific papers are organized for easy access to information

HOW TO READ LIKE A SCIENTIST

1. Title
2. Abstract
3. Conclusion/Summary
4. Results - at least the figures/images
5. Introduction (sometimes)
6. Discussion
7. Experimental/Methods/Observations
8. Introduction (other times)
9. Appendix
10. Background
11. References

Scientific papers are not meant to be read from beginning to end; they're read for information.

INTERVIEWING

INTERVIEW SUBJECTS

- How to find an expert
  - Authors of your sources
  - Interview subjects in your sources
  - People who work with kids
- How to contact an expert
  - Contact page on their website
  - Where do they work? Contact their outreach or publicity office.
  - Are they famous? Go through their publicist.
  - Non-famous academics generally answer their email
  - DM if possible

IF YOU CAN'T GET IN TOUCH…
BUT YOU STILL NEED A QUOTE

- Read what they've written
- Look for interviews – print or video
- TED talks

HOW TO INTERVIEW AN EXPERT

- Tell them up front that this is an article/book for kids
- Let them choose the mode: in-person, zoom, phone, email
- Prepare!
  - Do not interview someone to learn about a subject. Learn about the subject **before** the interview.*
- What questions will you ask?
  - Ask questions a kid would ask!
- How to get good quotes
- Record (with permission)
  - Think about transcription
- Be respectful of their time

* The 2 main objects of interviewing are (1) to find out interesting tidbits that are not in the research (What was your inspiration for… One thing I've always been curious/confused about is…) and (2) to get an interesting quote.

KEEPING TRACK OF SOURCES


David Bruno Silva/Unsplash


Maksym Kaharlytskyi/Unsplash

DO WHAT WORKS FOR YOU!

- Apps: EverNote, OneNote, Google Keep
  - RefWorks, Zotero, EndNote
  - Scrivener, MSWord, Google Docs
  - Spiral notebook, notecards
- Formats: MLA, APA, Chicago, Harvard, etc, etc, etc
  - Choose (or make up your own) system and be consistent
  - The goal is to be able to find the source again
    - Books: include call number and library
    - Online sources: include date accessed
- Where?
  - Footnotes in text
  - Notes

SAMPLE NOTE FORMAT

For every source you use…

- Bibliographic information
- Link to source or information about where you found the source
- Keywords
- Uses: how is this source going to be helpful to your manuscript?
- Summary
  - Include most important points, not every single fact
- Questions
- Connections

AVOIDING PLAGIARISM

- **DO NOT CUT AND PASTE**
  - Paraphrase
  - Also watch out for synonym replacement
- Take notes as bullet points rather than complete sentences
- Keep track of your sources
- Make sure you actually understand the information
- Use multiple sources; synthesize information

WHEN IS ENOUGH ENOUGH?

How to stop researching and start writing

You're finished with research when…

- You start seeing information that you already know
- You have more information than you'll need for the length/scope of your project
- You're starting to go off-topic and down a rabbit hole
- Your deadline is approaching

So start writing!


NASA

THANK YOU

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