

Tips for Doing Library Research Online

1. **Keep good notes**, whether you make an index card for each source, keep them in a Word document, make a notebook. Make sure you record the author's name, the article title, the journal, volume and issue where it was published, and the date of publication. If you are using a book, get the publisher name and the city and state of publication. For websites, also get the exact link to the article so you can find it again.
2. **Mark your own ideas**, thoughts and insights with a * or other symbol so you will remember whose idea that was. Anything not documented in your paper is assumed to be your own experience, analysis or opinion.
3. **Sherman College Library** resources:
<https://www.sherman.edu/library>
Crissy Lewis is happy to help you (clewis@sherman.edu) 800-849-8771 x 253
4. **College library databases**. Get a library card from a local college or community college. The card is free, and they have online databases that your taxes pay for. They are happy to give you the password to use them from home.

Some databases can only be used on campus, but that is free too. Also check with your local public library. The databases are searchable, and if the material is not available online, it can be copied through Interlibrary Loan for a minimal fee—usually less than \$5 per article for copying and mailing.

5. **Use the most specific keywords** you can think of. If at first you don't get good results, change the keywords. It's a good idea to use search engines like Google.com or Bing.com to get the initial set of keywords before you start looking in the library. If you aren't getting what you want in the search engine, you won't likely find it in the library.
6. **Be wary of internet sites that are not run by reputable companies**. Wikipedia is a great resource, but it's best to use it as a source of source materials. Look at the links at the end of an article to find original material. Remember that anyone can buy a domain name and set up a website for less than \$30 a year, even for .org sites. If they don't list their sources, and you don't know them personally, don't cite them, including lists of quotations. If you find a good quote, search for it in a documented source. Capt. Kirk never said, "Beam me up, Scottie."
7. **Be wary of article databases too**: ezinarticles.com, associatedcontent.com and other places that allow anyone to post any kind of article with no fact checking or other editing, other than limiting hyperlinks. You can write articles for these sites to drive traffic to your website regardless of subject matter or expertise. Check the author's bio before using any of this kind of information. Don't use information that has no documentation, date of publication, or author. You don't know where that information has come from or where it's been.