

Starting Your Research: How to Find Books, Journal Articles, Newspaper Articles

1. Choose a Topic

Use the following to generate ideas for your research topic:

- Scan journals or newspapers for articles on issues of interest.
- Scan general or specialized encyclopedias or handbooks.
- Join an electronic discussion list for a sample of topics being discussed in a particular field.
- Analyze news and public affairs programs.
- Do a broad search in one of the ALADIN databases and look for additional ideas in the abstracts, tables of contents, and subject headings that display.

2. Prepare for Research

Identify the ideas that make up your topic. For example, the topic **effects of bilingual education on academic achievement** has two main ideas: “bilingual education” and “academic achievement.” Think of synonyms for the ideas. This will help you match your description of the topic with descriptions listed in databases and indexes. You can use these synonyms as ‘keywords’ to search a database.

3. Select Your Research Tools

Based on the kinds of resources you need to write your paper, select from the following research tools:

To find:	For:	Use this research tool:
encyclopedias handbooks dictionaries annual reviews	background information (definitions, overviews, etc.)	WRLC Libraries Catalog (to find out which encyclopedias CUA and the other WRLC libraries own); <i>Encyclopedia Britannica Online</i> , AccessScience (through ALADIN)
books	in-depth coverage of topic	WRLC Libraries Catalog (to find out which books CUA and the other WRLC libraries own); other Web library catalogs for other institutions
journal articles	current, scholarly information	Article databases (through ALADIN)
newspaper articles	current information, public opinion	<i>LEXIS-NEXIS</i> (through ALADIN); newspaper sites on the Internet (e.g., washingtonpost.com) See reference desk for newspapers in print and microfilm.
whether CUA owns a journal or newspaper		WRLC Libraries Catalog (search by Journal Title)
statistics	facts to back up your opinion	<i>Statistical Universe</i> and STAT-USA (through ALADIN); <i>Statistical Abstract of the United States</i> and other print indexes and compilations; Internet (for www.fedstats.gov and other government statistics)

How to Find a Book in the Online Catalog:

- Go to the **CUA Libraries homepage** (<http://libraries.cua.edu>).
- Under “Catalog”, select **Keyword** from the “Search by” menu.
- Search for a **book** on your topic. Use the following examples to figure out how to type the search:

Type “**sleep deprivation**” to find books on sleep deprivation

Type **ozone and environment** to find books on ozone and the environment

Type “**bilingual education**” and **California** to find books on bilingual education in California

HINT: Use **AND** to combine ideas.

HINT: Use “ ” (quotation marks) for phrases (words that should appear next to one another, in a certain order). Examples of phrases are “sleep deprivation” and “bilingual education.”

HINT: Use the “Limit by Location” or “Set Limits” menus to restrict the search to books found at CUA.

- Type your search words in the box, then either click on **Search** or press <Enter>.

How to Find a Journal Article:

- Go to the **CUA Libraries homepage** (<http://libraries.cua.edu>).
- For this example, we’ll use **ProQuest (Periodical Abstracts)**. Under “Databases”, select **General Multiple-subject**, then click on **Go**.
- Click on **ProQuest (Periodical Abstracts)**.
- Type a search statement to find a **journal article** on your topic. Use the following examples to figure out how to type the search:

Type **sleep and academic achievement** to find articles on the effects of sleep on academic achievement

Type **curfews and teenagers** to find articles on the pros and cons of curfews for teenagers

Type **genetic engineering and food** to find articles on genetically engineered food

- Type your search words in the box, then either click on **Search** or press <Enter>.
- See if the full text of your article is available to print or e-mail. Look at the icons below the article titles.

- If the full text is not available, do the following to find out if CUA owns the journal in which your article is published:

Click on **Find a Copy** to search CUA's online subscriptions for the article. If it is not online, go to the online catalog (**WRLC Libraries Catalog**). Search by **Journal Title** (click on the **Journal Title** button in the menu). Type the name of the journal in which your article is published and click on **Search**. Look to see if there is a CU record for your journal. If so, click on the title of the journal to display the record. The record should indicate whether CUA owns the volume in which your article was published.

How to Find a Full-text Newspaper Article:

- Go to the **CUA Libraries homepage** (<http://libraries.cua.edu>).
- Under "Databases" select **News** then click on **Go**.
- Click on **LEXIS-NEXIS Academic Universe**.
- Using the **Keyword** text box, type a search statement to find a **newspaper article** on your topic. Use the following examples to figure out how to type the search:

Type **minimum wage and unemployment** to find articles on how minimum wage rates affect unemployment

Type **presidential elections and internet** to find articles on how the Internet relates to presidential elections

Type **standardized tests and public schools** to find articles on the use of standardized tests in public schools

- Type your search words in the box, then either click on **Search** or press <Enter>.
- Click on the article's title to read the article.

How to Get Help With Your Search:

- Visit the Mullen Library **Information Desk**.
- Call the Mullen Library **Information Desk** at 202-319-5070.
- Use the Instant Messaging (IM) Reference Service, (click **IM@theLibrary** on the Libraries' home page at <http://libraries.cua.edu/>)
- Check the list of Subject Librarians available on the **CUA Libraries homepage** (<http://libraries.cua.edu>) to find the contact information for the librarian dealing with your subject.