How to Find Sources

1 Bibliography Assignment

Now that you have a research question, you need to do some research. This document tells you what types of sources are appropriate, and how to find them. This bibliography assignment will get you started.

On November 28 please turn in an annotated bibliography for your term paper. By “annotated” I mean a brief (short paragraph) description of each article or book, and what it contributes to your topic. There should be a minimum of five bibliographic entries.

I also want you to list the names of at least two on-line databases that you used to get your sources. With each database you name, please also list at least one reference you found by using it, and the search terms you used to find the reference (more on databases below).

This will not be graded, but a lousy job on this will tip you into the lower grade if you are on the borderline, while an excellent job will tip you into the higher grade.

Most, perhaps all, of these references should appear in your term paper. Your final paper is likely to include other sources that you find after you turn in the bibliography.

2 What types of sources are appropriate

Your term paper can include some web references, but this bibliography must include five references from the primary literature—not a web review, or an encyclopedia article. It can include books, articles in professional journals, and serious trade books and articles so long as these demonstrate good scholarship.

3 How to find scholarly sources: databases and more

There are various tried-and-true ways of finding sources, including starting with references in something you have (like the text) and looking at the references cited in those works, etc. You may also find references to the primary literature by doing a general web search. However, our library has access to many on-line databases, and I want you to learn to use them. That’s why I am requiring that you indicate the names of at least two on-line databases you used in your search, and what you found with them.

Two useful public resources are (a) http://scholar.google.com and (b) pubmed.gov. The latter is for medically-related topics only. The former is not the same as a general google search. In most cases, you will only have access to the abstract, but you can write down the reference and get the full article from Marriott library.
There are also databases that are available only through Marriott library. You can access these databases on-line from a University computer (or from home by using a university proxy). Go to the Marriott homepage (www.lib.utah.edu) and over on the left you will see Research Tools. Under that heading you will see “article databases” Click on that, and explore. Among the databases I have found most helpful are: psycinfo (for psychology), sociological abstracts (general social science), and web of science. The latter is especially useful, because once you find a good article you can use web of science to find later articles that have cited it.

With all these databases, you enter a search term that describes what you want to know. Doing this successfully is an art; too general a search term will get you hundreds of articles; too specific a search term will get you nothing. You may need to try several different versions of the same topic (“gender” as well as “sex” for example).

If you have trouble, ask a librarian for help. Marie Paiva works with our department and she is wonderful—ask for her, and if she has time to help you, she will.

In other words, I am expecting some serious scholarly research here. You aren’t in high school anymore, Dorothy.