

Accelerate Your Professional Writing: Using Resources to Deliver a Quality Literature Review in Less Time

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1 : Define your question or topic.

Before you start it is important to have a **question** or **topic** in mind. This focuses your research and saves wasted time reviewing irrelevant material.

Topic or Problem:

From your topic, you ask a question which you can research. Here are two ways you can get **from topic to question**.

1: Refine by Narrowing

Thinking of the 6 journalistic question words can help. For example, *where* is this problem occurring? *Who* is impacted by it? (*TIP: You don't need to answer all 6 to develop your topic.*)

Who

What

Where

When

Why

How

2: Refine by Searching

If you don't know enough about your topic to be able to answer the 6 question words, then this is another approach.

Search for background information on your topic.

2 : Break it down.

A **researchable question** or **topic** has **core concepts** (usually nouns or noun phrases) that can be broken into different **keywords**. Identify the core concepts for your topic and **synonyms** or **antonyms** for each concept.

<i>Keywords</i>	<i>Synonyms</i>	<i>Synonyms</i>
Concept A _____ =	<input type="text"/>	or <input type="text"/>
and		
Concept B _____ =	<input type="text"/>	or <input type="text"/>
and		
Concept C _____ =	<input type="text"/>	or <input type="text"/>

Your Search:

3 : Find sources.

Your **information need** determines which resources you use.

Resource:	What information will you get from the source?	How might you use that information?

4 : Evaluate sources.

As you look for sources you must also evaluate them to determine if they are credible.

Review the sources on the same topic. Ask yourself the **6 question words** to determine the credibility of these sources.

Who is the author? (*Not their name, but what are their credentials or qualifications, affiliation, conflicts of interest?*)

What type of document is this?

Where is this published?

When was it published?

Why was it published? (*What is the author's purpose for writing?*)

How does the source present data and evidence?

Which source do you think is most credible? Why?

5 : Librarians = free research help.

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