

Communication Arts

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Search Guides

Welcome!

This guide will help you find, evaluate, and cite your information. Just use the tabs at the top.



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Quick Library Links

- CLC Libraries Homepage
- Your Library Record
- Getting a Library Card

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Improve your results



Let [YouTube](#) show you how to get better search results

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Even more topics!

- Hot Paper Topics-Best Information on the Net from St. Ambrose University
- IDEA: International Debate Education Association

Finding a Topic

1. Brainstorm possible topic ideas

- Consider your personal interests.
- Talk to family, friends, and classmates.
- Look at the headlines on Google News or Yahoo
- Scan the list of topics on Opposing Viewpoints homepage
- Click [this link](#) from ContraCosta Community College

2. Review assignment requirements

- What kind of assignment is it - 5 minute oral presentation, 10 page paper, 50 page paper?
- What formats do you need - visual, audio, printed, electronic?
- Is point of view an issue? Do you need opinions?
- How much time do you have?

3. List keywords to define your topic

- State your research topic as a question.
- Think about the terms that describe your topic. These terms will become the key for searching for information about your subject in library catalogs, online databases, and other resources.
- Sample keywords for research topic "What if Americorp tackled the Environment?":
 - Americorps
 - volunteerism
 - alternative energy
 - reforestation

4. Gather background information on your topic

- It's hard to get started if you don't know much about your topic. Do some general reading in an encyclopedia to get an overview of the topic. This is also a great first step towards refining your topic.

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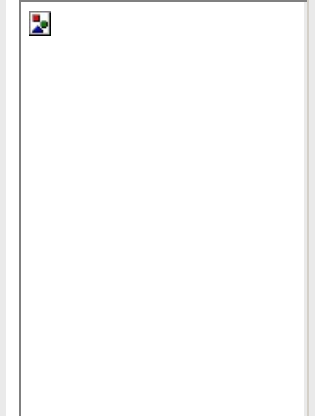
How to get books & media from other libraries

We'd love to own every item you want but unfortunately, it's not possible. If CLC does not own an item you're looking for, we can borrow it from WorldCat for you. Yes, it's FREE! Here's how:

- While **on campus**, search by author or title in Worldcat.
- When the record comes up, click on "request this item"
- When the next screen comes up, fill in the required information
- You will be called by the library when your item arrives.



CLC Murphy Librarians



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Putting it together

Once you have your sources and a rough draft of your project, you can polish it up with help from the Writing Center



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Choosing the right keywords



What keyword would you use to describe what you see in this image?

SODA?

POP?

CARBONATED BEVERAGES?

SOFT DRINKS?

If you only searched using SODA you would miss the articles that used one of the other terms / phrases. So, remember to use alternative terms / synonyms when you are

- [ProCon.org](#) ★★★★★
presents "controversial issues in a straightforward, nonpartisan primarily pro-con format"
- [FactCheck.org: About](#)
[FactCheck.org](#) ★★★★★
"nonpartisan, nonprofit consumer advocate for voters"

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doing research so that you don't miss the best articles!

When you brainstorm for alternative terms, you are creating a CONCEPT MAP for keywords. For more on this topic, check out this YouTube video on [Developing Your Topic with a Concept Map](#).

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