

Reliable Information

A first-rate research paper needs information from reliable sources. Books, scholarly journals, research databases, and librarian-selected websites are accessible at your local branch as well as through the library's website from your home or school.

How do you determine which sources are reliable?

- Note the credentials of the author, creator, and/or publisher.
- Note the currency of the material.
- Check the accuracy of the facts by verifying in more than one source, or determine that the information has been reviewed by experts in the field.
- Good information is usually well organized by topics.
- Sometimes the best information is not the most readily available (i.e. Google search).

Finding databases on the library website:

1. Go to "mymcpl.org".
2. Click the **Online Resources** link and select **Research Databases**.
3. Browse the databases by subject area or by title.

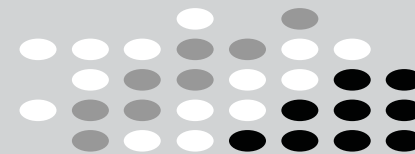
Library Research Databases vs. Internet Websites

The library subscribes to over 200 Research Databases based on the reliability criteria we just listed. These can be accessed from the library's homepage and are offered to library patrons at no charge. Research Databases represent a wide variety of subjects perfect for research papers:

- Biographies
- Current Topics
- Dictionaries and Encyclopedias
- Geography and Travel
- Government and Politics
- History
- Literature and Poetry
- Science

The library's Research Databases in the above subject categories offer:

- Magazine and newspaper articles
- Reference books
- Audio and video files
- Historical documents
- Pictures and maps
- Essays providing opposing viewpoints
- Literary criticisms
- Television and radio transcripts



Internet websites also exist on an infinite number of subjects. However, the information found in them can often be biased and unreliable. Among the problems with regular Internet searches:

- Links located through searching may or may not be appropriate to the subject.
- Websites can be produced by anyone with a computer. This sometimes includes those who either accidentally or intentionally provide incorrect information.
- Not many books or scholarly journals are offered on the web with free access.
- Information found on the web can be very outdated and incomplete.
- Results from web search engines can be long and irrelevant.
- Links found in regular web searches often no longer exist.

There are some websites that offer accurate and quality information. A collection of links to such websites can be found under *Online Resources* on the library's homepage. These librarian-selected websites meet the criteria for reliable sources.

LiveHomework Help on the library's website allows you to upload your paper and talk about it with a live online tutor. The tutor can help with proofreading

Paper Writing Assistance

and answer questions about grammar rules. Tutors are available from Noon-Midnight everyday. The service is 100% free. Go to mymcpl.org to sign up.

How to Cite Research Databases and Websites

The Question

“The question” is where it all begins.

Research papers can be about anything. History, literature, science, current events, and even popular culture can all be the subjects of first-rate papers. Sometimes your teacher or professor will give you a topic, and other times you will be asked to develop your own.

What is important is that, whatever your subject, you have a question for which you would like to know the answer. Writing a research paper is simply trying to answer the question you have asked.

That is where the library comes in...

Assembling a citation for an online resource to include in a bibliography can be a tricky task. The library has identified two websites that can help:

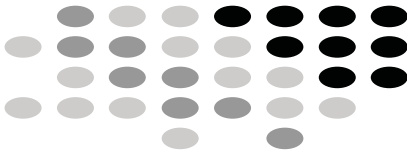
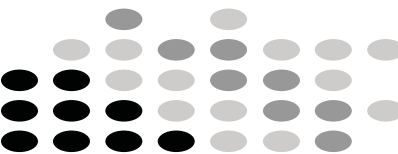
The Duke University Libraries offer a site which includes a variety of citation examples in five different styles.

<http://library.duke.edu/research/citing/workscited>

Citation Machine is an interactive site which allows the user to input the information from a source and select the citation format desired. The information is reformatted automatically to fit the specified format.

<http://citationmachine.net>

Using the Library to Write a First-Rate Research Paper



Mid-Continent Public Library's 30 branches are located in Clay, Jackson, and Platte counties. They are filled with librarians who specialize in finding answers.

To locate your branch, go to our website or call 816-836-5200. Good luck on the paper!

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