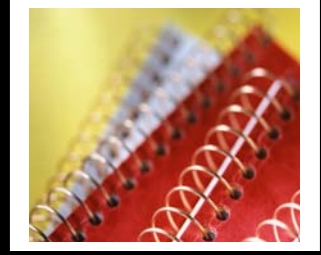


Choosing Databases

A Research & Library Skills Exercise ♦ 2011-2012
www.lib.umd.edu/UES/engl101/exercises.html



Instructor's Name: _____ ENGL 101 Section: _____ Class Meeting Time: _____

Your Name: _____ Date: _____

Why is choosing an appropriate database(s) important?

Depending on where you look, you can find different types of information. In order to find the information you need, you will have to search appropriate resources.

For example, if you are writing a paper about *stem cell research* and want to find articles from a *religious point of view*, a biology database probably wouldn't be very helpful, because the focus of that database will be from a scientific, not a religious, point of view. Instead, you will want to search a database that focuses on religious topics. A general/multidisciplinary database might have articles that support both of these points of view.

The Exercise:

After completing this worksheet you will have a better understanding of how to choose appropriate databases for the type of information you need to support your thesis.

Begin by describing your research topic in broad terms. List your specific information needs in the boxes below:

The research topic:	The specific information needs: (e.g., List the type of questions you will need answered to support your argument and list the sources you think will contain that information.)
<p><i>Example:</i> <i>Effects of cyber-bullying on teenagers</i></p>	<p><i>Example:</i> <i>What can teachers/administrators do?</i> <i>What are the emotional effects on the teenagers?</i> <i>What can parents do?</i> <i>Recent news articles discussing examples</i></p>
<p>My research topic:</p>	<p>My specific information needs:</p>

Who cares or is knowledgeable about your topic?

As Gerald Graff and Cathy Berkenstein write in *They Say/I Say*, it is important to consider who would care about the issues you're writing about. This will help you to frame your discussion effectively so that it makes a significant impact on your audience (pages 88-90).

Thinking about "who cares" about your topic can also lead you to find relevant and meaningful information. People with different interests and expertise will study a topic from diverse perspectives. In order to develop a complete understanding of your topic, you may need to read arguments from multiple points of view.

List three groups of people who care about your topic:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

How can you find reliable information by or for the people you just identified?

Use the Libraries' databases at: www.researchport.umd.edu. There you can access articles in both general and subject-specific databases. In Research Port, databases are grouped into subject categories.

Directions:

- > Start at the Libraries' home page: www.lib.umd.edu
- > Click on Research Port
- > Click on "**See all categories**"

List three subject categories in Research Port that could contain useful databases for your topic:

*For example: The following 3 subject categories could be useful in finding information on Cyber Bullying:
1) Psychology, 2) Education, 3) Sociology*

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____