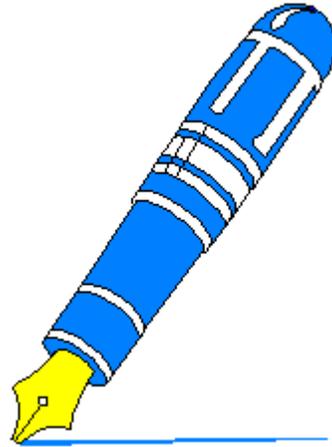


# Writing Skills II

## Finding Information on Current Issues



\_\_\_\_\_ NAME

\_\_\_\_\_ DATE

Revised Sept 2014

Choose a topic that interests you from the list below.

- |                             |                   |                    |                            |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| Child labor                 | Censorship        | Marijuana          | Capital punishment         |
| Terrorism                   | Juvenile crime    | Affirmative action | Endangered species         |
| Genetically engineered food | Divorce           | Homosexuality      | Attention deficit disorder |
| Health insurance            | Sexual harassment | Steroids           | Gambling                   |
| Cloning                     | Women's rights    | Climate change     |                            |

Or you may choose another current issue that interests you.

What topic did you choose? \_\_\_\_\_

### 1. Finding Background Information

It's important to get an overview of the topic so that you have a general understanding of the issue. Background information may include: the history of an issue; why it's controversial or in the news, and facts and statistics. Sources for background information include encyclopedias, almanacs and other materials. These are called **reference** sources.

The **keywords** you use make a big difference in your success. Often the keywords may seem obvious, but there are usually other words that can be useful. For example, if you chose the topic Capital punishment, you could also use Death penalty. Try variations.

#### Exercise 1. Using an online encyclopedia

You will use *Funk & Wagnall's New World Encyclopedia*. It has basic coverage of topics so is a good place to start.

On a computer with internet access, go to the ACC Library home page <http://library.austincc.edu>

Click on **A-Z List of Database** in the left column.



#### FOR STUDENTS

- Chat with a Librarian
- Check out Library Material
- Your Library Record
- How do I...? Library FAQs
- Get Assignment & Research Help
- **A-Z List of Databases**
- Research/Subject Guides
- Citing Sources
- Student Learning Success Toolbox

Then click on **the letter F**. Then click on **Funk & Wagnall's New World Encyclopedia**.

Do a search for your topic.

You will sometimes get several encyclopedia articles listed. Don't automatically assume the first one is the best. Try a couple of them at least.

If you have problems finding information on your topic, talk with a Reference Librarian.

For the one that is most useful, write the title of the article:

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Read the article and summarize the information in your own words (2-3 sentences).

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## 2. Finding Current Information

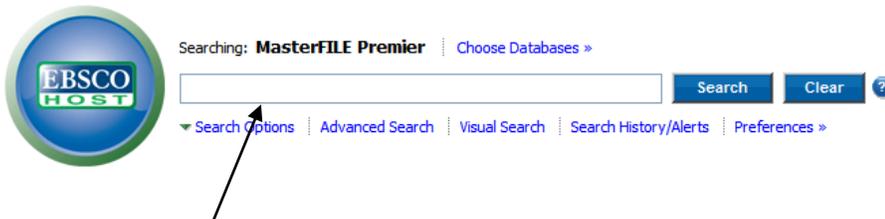
Ideas, laws, opinions, and events related to current issues and hot topics are constantly changing. When you are researching issues or topics in the news, it is important to find the most current information possible. One of the best sources for current information is a periodical article. Periodicals include magazines, journals and newspapers.

To find articles, you must use an online database called a periodical index. You use these indexes to search thousands of periodicals for articles on your topic. The index you will use includes the full text of the article so you can print the article from the computer or e-mail it.

### Exercise 2. Using a periodical index

On a computer with internet access, go to the ACC library home page (<http://library.austincc.edu>). Click on **A-Z List of Databases** like you did in Exercise 1.

From the alphabetical list, **click on M** and scroll down the list of titles and then click on **MasterFile Premier**.



Type your topic into the search box. Then click the **search** button. Click on one of the articles in the result list that looks good.

What is the title of the article? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the date of the article? \_\_\_\_\_

What magazine or newspaper ("source") originally published this article? \_\_\_\_\_

Write the main idea of the article and one thing you learned from it.

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*Hint:* If you are using a computer in the Library, click on the home button at the top of the window to return to the main Library homepage.



### Finding Opinions on an Issue

Opinions or editorials on current issues appear in magazines, newspapers, books, television programs, and on the Internet. To find opinions on a topic, you can search a periodical index as we did in the previous exercise. Another good source for persuasive essays is the the **Pro/Con** section of the **CQ Researcher**.

### Exercise 3. Using CQ Researcher



The **CQ Researcher** is an online information source that is published weekly and covers "hot topics" in the news. The ACC Libraries subscribe to it. Each issue is devoted to one topic. It provides:

- an overview of a topic
- the history of an issue
- why the issue is newsworthy
- current statistics and facts
- persuasive essays on the issue

For the online version of **CQ Researcher**:

- From the library's homepage, click on **A-Z List of Databases**.
- Click on the **letter C**.
- Click on **CQ Researcher Online**.
- When it opens, click in the "Search by keyword" box and type your topic. If you can't find anything, try different keywords or ask the librarian for help.
- Pick one that looks good. (NOTE: Don't use any labeled as "Short Report.")

What is the title of the **CQ Researcher** on your topic? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the date of the **CQ Researcher** on your topic? (Some may be old.) \_\_\_\_\_

Click on the **CQ Researcher** article you just listed. Read the "Introduction" section and summarize in your own words the issue being discussed:

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#### Exercise 4: Persuasive essays

Click on the **Pro/Con** link in the left column for the report you're using. If you cannot locate this, ask the librarian for help. Read the two persuasive essays and write down the question being addressed.

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Which side of the argument do you agree with? \_\_\_\_\_ **Pro** \_\_\_\_\_ **Con**

Write down two points made in the essay that helped convince you to select the **Pro** or **Con** essay.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

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2. \_\_\_\_\_

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Congratulations! You've now completed the Writing Skills II assignment "Finding Information on Current Issues." Be sure to put your name and the date on the cover of the assignment.

**WRITING SKILLS II  
LIBRARY ASSIGNMENT  
QUESTIONNAIRE**

*Fill out this questionnaire after you have finished the Library Assignment and then give it to your teacher. Your teacher will send it to Frank Cronin at the Northridge Campus.*

**Please write complete detailed answers.**

1. Was any part of the assignment confusing? If so, which part was confusing and why was it confusing?

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2. In what ways was the assignment helpful? For instance, did it help you with your argument essay? If it did help, how did it help?

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3. Was this assignment the first time that you

Used the computers in the library?\_\_\_\_\_

Used an online encyclopedia?\_\_\_\_\_

Used an online periodical index?\_\_\_\_\_

Read a *CQ Researcher*?\_\_\_\_\_