

# LIBRARY ASSIGNMENT

## Level Three RESEARCH IN A SUBJECT AREA

Austin Community College  
Produced by Library Services  
and Developmental Reading



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date due \_\_\_\_\_

June 2011, Teresa Ashley

To write a research paper you must investigate your topic by reading about it in many different sources, such as books, magazines, newspapers, and Web documents. The information you gather from these sources will be used to support the points you make in your paper.

## 1. CHOOSING A TOPIC IN YOUR SUBJECT AREA

Find a topic that interests you. For ideas, look at the Table of Contents of your textbook or review your lecture notes. When you research a topic you are interested in, you will enjoy spending time investigating and writing about it.

To develop a good paper topic, ask yourself these questions:

- What do I already know about this subject?
- What interests me most about it?
- Is there anything I wonder about or am puzzled about regarding this subject?
- What are the issues?
- Do I have specific ideas or opinions on the issues involved?

Once you have decided on a broad topic, you will need to narrow it down to a manageable size. If you were assigned a 3-page paper and decided to write on "technology and society," for example, you would have to focus on a more specific issue related to that topic. "Technology and society" is a huge topic with many issues and subtopics, and you would only have a limited number of pages in which to discuss it.

**Too general:** *technology and society*    **➔**    **Narrower:** *monitoring Internet use in the workplace*

After you have narrowed your topic, try thinking of different ways to approach it.

Do you want to simply define and describe an issue?

*Example:* "the problem of personal Internet use in the workplace."

Do you want to explain how the issue has been addressed?

*Example:* "Techniques for monitoring personal Internet use in the workplace."

Do you want to argue for a position on the topic?

*Example:* "Monitoring Internet use in the workplace violates employee privacy."

Write your subject (topic) here: \_\_\_\_\_

Now write a sentence describing your topic:

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What word or words will you use to search for information on this topic? These will be the **keywords** you will use to search for information.

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Ask a librarian for help if you need it.



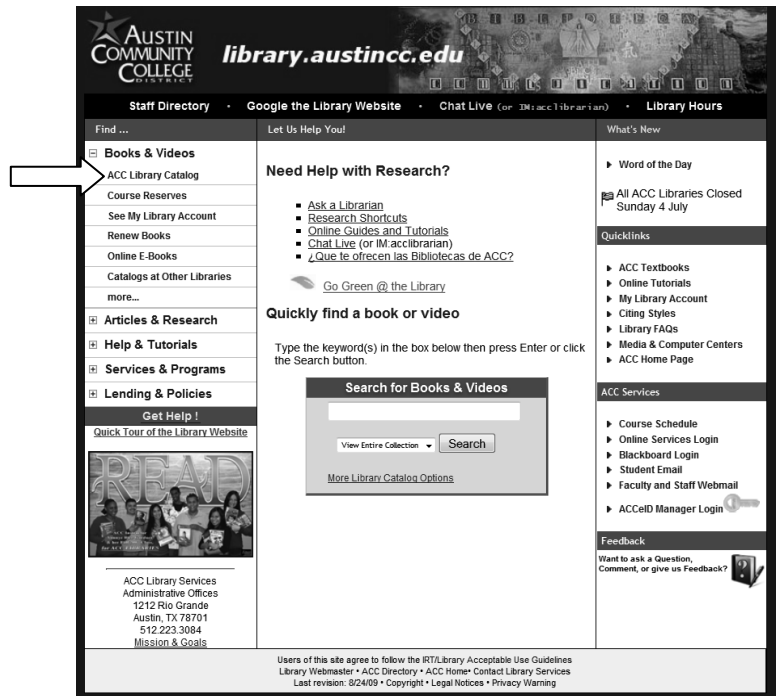
## 4. FINDING A BOOK ON A TOPIC

Begin on the library home page on the computer. If you are in the library, this page should come up automatically.

Click on **Books & Videos**, and then click on **ACC Libraries Catalog** in the drop down menu.

Use **Keyword** search to locate a book on a topic of your choice. (This is the first option you will see on the search page.)

Type your search terms in the search box and click **Search** or press **Enter** to get results. Ask a librarian for help, if necessary.



What word or words did you choose to use to search for this topic?

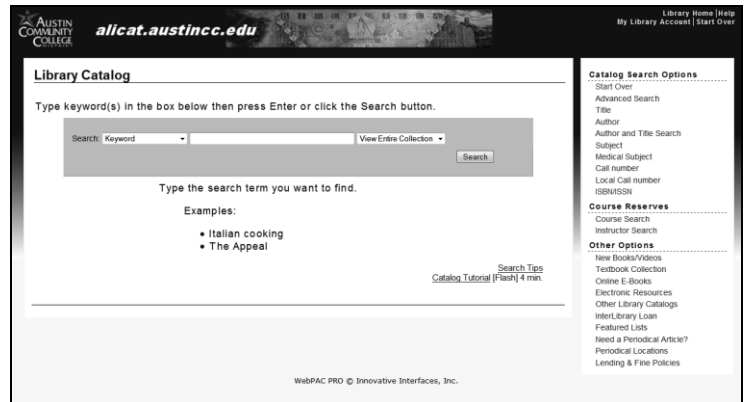
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### Search hints:

If you type more than one word, those words will be treated as a phrase.

Use **AND** between words to combine two or more concepts: "teenagers **AND** alcohol."

Use **OR** between words to expand your search, with words that are similar in meaning (synonyms):

"teenagers **OR** adolescents" or between related concepts where you want to find information on either or all of them: "drugs **OR** alcohol **OR** addiction."

Click on one of the underlined titles in your Result List. You may need to scroll down and go to the next page to see all the items found.

How many copies are there in ACC libraries? \_\_\_\_\_

Are any copies shelved at this campus library? \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no

Can a copy be checked out immediately? \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no

**FILL IN THE FOLLOWING:**

Author(s) (if given): \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Call Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Publisher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date published: \_\_\_\_\_

**5. USING A PERIODICAL INDEX TO FIND ARTICLES**

You can find articles on a topic in *Academic Search Complete*, along with abstracts (summaries) of the articles in electronic indexes. Some articles are full text and can be printed, emailed or saved.





Click on **Articles & Research** on the ACC Library Home Page, and then click on **Articles & More** in the drop down menu.

Click on **A** in the **Alphabetical list of e-resources**, then select *Academic Search Complete*.

Type words describing your topic into the search box and click **Search** or press **Enter**.



You may need to try different words for your search if the ones you first use do not get you the results you want.



Look at your Result List. You'll find two types of full text articles: HTML Full Text and PDF Full Text.  [HTML Full Text](#)  [PDF Full Text](#)

PDF Full Text is a graphic, just like a photocopy. These articles must be opened and printed with Adobe Reader software, which is on all the library computers.

Find a short, recently published article. Click on the underlined article title to view the article and its abstract (summary).

Click the **Print**  icon, then click the  button to print your article. Attach your printout to this packet. Be sure to ask the librarian for help whenever you need it! **Fill in the following for your article:**

Author(s) (if given): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of magazine: \_\_\_\_\_

Article title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date published? \_\_\_\_\_ Volume number \_\_\_\_\_ Page numbers \_\_\_\_\_

## 6. USING A WEB SOURCE

Start with a search engine, such as **Google.com**, which can locate resources that are useful for college research.

Type this URL (address):

**http://www.google.com** in the search box.

Use your search terms to find information.

Look at the results.

Are there good information sources here?

Now try an **Advanced Search** and limit the domain by .edu (for colleges and universities), .org (for **organizations**, or .gov (for **government** pages).



Ask a librarian for assistance if needed.

### Fill in the following:

Author(s) (if given): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of source: \_\_\_\_\_

Date published or last updated: \_\_\_\_\_

URL (Web page address): \_\_\_\_\_

Date accessed (date you visited the page): \_\_\_\_\_

## CITING YOUR SOURCES

When you use ideas or words from a source you need to cite or document where these came from. There are many ways to do this. For this exercise, you will use a very simple form. Write the information about your sources below, using the style of the example (you can underline for *italics*).

*Example for books:*

Drago-Severson, Eleanor. *Becoming Adult Learners: Principles And Practices for Effective Development*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2004.

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*Example for articles (from full text articles online):*

Vaccaro, Annemarie, and Cheryl D. Lovell. "Inspiration From Home: Understanding Family as Key to Adult Women's Self-Investment." *Adult Education Quarterly* 60.2 (2010): 161. *MasterFILE Premier*. Web. 29 June 2011.

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*Example for Web pages (first date is from the Web page, the second is date you visited it):*

"Characteristics of Adult Learners." *R.I.T. Online Learning*. Rochester Institute of Technology. 2010. Web. 29 June 2011. <[http://online.rit.edu/faculty/teaching\\_strategies/adult\\_learners.cfm](http://online.rit.edu/faculty/teaching_strategies/adult_learners.cfm)>.

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