CANNING: ENGL B1A

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Research Process

1. Choosing and developing a research topic.
2. Finding books, articles, and other materials.
3. Evaluating resources.
4. Citing sources.

Proposal Paper Research Assignment

- At least five (5) academic or reputable sources
- Description of the problem
- Proposal for a solution
- Justification—why your solution is best

https://sites.google.com/a/g.coppellisd.com/types-of-expository-writing/problem-solution
Acceptable Topics

You can choose any of these topics...

- College admissions process
- College athletics
- Cost of college
- For-profit colleges
- Online education
- Student loans
- Role of fraternities & sororities on college campuses
- Time it takes to get a college degree
- Veterans and education

...but these are still too broad of a problem to research!

Questions You Should Be Asking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Why?</strong></th>
<th><em>Why</em> do we have problems with college athletics?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>How?</strong></td>
<td><em>How</em> can we change things for the better?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Which is best?</strong></td>
<td>Given the choices before us, <em>which</em> is most likely to do the most good? <em>Which</em> plan is best? <em>Which</em> solution will work best?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
First Step: Get a Working Knowledge

“You have a working knowledge of a topic when you can talk about it for one minute without repeating yourself.”

--(Research Strategies, Badke, 2008, p.21)

- Read material that will give you a broader picture of the topic.

Reference Books

■ Examples: encyclopedia, dictionary, almanac, atlas, directory, handbook, thesaurus.
■ Gives overview or background info on a topic.
■ Get ideas for a topic or to narrow down.
■ Quick access to facts.
■ Not read cover to cover.
■ Can’t be checked out.
■ Found in bookcases with green labels.
Keep Going!

- As you learn more, you should be asking more questions.
- Pick one of your questions to explore in depth, and act as a problem to solve.
- This should help you focus in and narrow down your topic.

Brainstorm possible solutions and possible oppositions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem/Solution Pre-write Example</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Problem</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cigarette Smoking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Solution</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer help to those who are addicted and create programs to prevent new addicts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Educate youths at an earlier age through media, news and medical services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Make patches, gum and other nicotine programs more affordable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Charge more for cigarettes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Refutation/Conclusion</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some will argue it's against their freedoms to phase this habit out but second smoke takes the rights and lives away from others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some will argue it's too late to help those who are addicted but with the right support and accessibility for help they can quit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IT’S TIME FOR MORE RESEARCH!
How do I know whether a source is academic or reputable?

Books

- Author bio on dust jacket—are they an expert on the topic?—career, degrees, other research/publications?
- Publishing company—University Press?
- Librarians selected it by reading reviews & building an academic library.

Articles

- Author bio at beginning or end of article—are they an expert on the topic?—affiliated with a university?
- Published in an academic journal. Usually long, detailed, & hard to read.
- Usually has an abstract, and will always have works cited/references—where they got their information.
Magazines vs. Academic Journals

- **Magazines**
  - General Audience
  - Colorful pictures/ads
  - 6th grade reading level

- **Academic Journals**
  - Selected audience
  - Higher vocabulary used, specific to that industry
  - Lots of text and graphs
  - Peer-reviewed articles
Library Resources With 24/7 Access
Library On-line Catalog

- BC Library Catalog
- Use to find non-fiction, reference, and e-books
- Use Basic “Subject begins with” search
Subject Headings

- The library on-line catalog uses specific labels for subject headings/topics. It is expecting you to use those search terms.

- If you need help figuring out the right words to use, ask a Reference Librarian!

To the library catalog!
eBooks

- Some search results for BC Library Catalog = eBooks (single user)
- Use BC eBook Collection for over 170,000 eBooks (multi-user) not accessible by Library Catalog
What Are Databases?

What Are Databases? Video
Databases

- Databases are searchable collections of reliable, vetted resources, like encyclopedias, magazines, academic journals, and newspapers.

- Not part of the visible Internet—Google doesn’t have access to these articles.

- We pay for access to the servers that host the database search-engines.
How to Talk to Databases

- Find **key words or phrases** in your essential question.
  - *The word or words that the question is about.*
  - *The important words in the question.*
  - *Example: How does someone’s poverty level affect their access to higher education?*
  - *What are the important words?*

How does someone’s **poverty** level affect their access to **higher education**?
How to Talk to Databases

Next you will develop a list of **synonyms** for these key words/phrases.

What are words we could use for **higher education**?

college, university, post-secondary education
Let’s See It In Action...

Keywords Video
How to Talk to Databases

- But what if the author uses colleges or universities?

- Truncation
  - Truncate = to shorten or take off at the end
  - Use * (Shift 8)

  college and colleges -------- college*
  university and universities -------- universit*
Boolean Operators

**AND**
Finds information about both terms
Narrows your search
Makes your search more relevant

**OR**
Finds information about either term
Broadens your search

**NOT**
Excludes information from your search
Recommended Databases

- Academic Search Complete
- MasterFILE Complete
- Psychology & Behavioral Sciences Collection
- Newspaper Source Plus
- ERIC
- Military & Government Collection
Getting to the Databases
From Home

Use your BC @ number, **without** the @ symbol.

[To the Databases!](#)
Give credit where credit is due!
Those weren’t your ideas!
How will I remember all this?!

- Use the Library’s navigation bar to access our LibGuides.

- “ENGL B1A: Problem/Solution Proposal Essay”
Now it’s your turn to research!