

Resources

Researching is not an easy task. It takes a lot of time and effort so it is important to know where to look to find the type of information that you need. You have already completed the first step by identifying and articulating your research topic. From here, the next step in the process is to determine what types of resources you should consult to support your research.

There are numerous types of resources that can be used in order to find information to complete your assignment. These include the Internet, newspapers, journal articles and books. The type of information you need will help you to decide what resource type is best for you.

We all know that it is easy to find hundreds of websites on a topic by using popular search engines such as Google. If your research topic is dealing with contemporary events that may not yet have been described within books or articles, the Internet is a good place to go for information. However, you must be sure that the information you find has come from a reliable and unbiased source. In English 110, students usually are asked not to use many websites in their research papers. Therefore, Internet searching will not be covered in depth in this tutorial.

Don't be confused if your instructor informs you that you are not to use Internet resources in your paper: online resources such as electronic journals that are made available through the Library website are carefully selected, reliable resources that can be used to complete your research.

Newspaper articles provide brief and summarized information regarding a variety of topics and can be searched using library databases. Newspapers will often cover current events, local news, commentaries and opinion pieces. If your topic deals with cutting-edge events such as the current global economic crisis, newspapers are a good resource choice.

Articles are published within journals that are published periodically throughout the year. As such, they often contain information that is less current than newspapers, but more current than books. Articles are also much shorter in length than books. Articles are often found within scholarly journals, and can represent research or a scholarly analysis of a topic.

Books are excellent sources that cover a topic in-depth. However, they take a longer time to publish—sometimes several years— so the information may not be as current as the information published in articles. For this reason, it is helpful to try to find the most recent editions of books.

In general, resources can be either *popular* or *scholarly* in nature. Newspapers are a good example of a popular resource: they are written in an easy-to-understand style for the general public rather than for experts in a certain field. They also contain lots of advertising and usually focus upon current events. Journalists, not scholars, provide the content of the articles.

Scholarly resources such as those found in peer-reviewed journals go through an extensive review process, and generally report on research rather than current events. You can tell you are looking at a

scholarly resource if the writer (usually an expert on the subject) includes an extensive bibliography or list of resources at the end of the article.