What do you already know about the topic and what do you need to know?

Develop a working knowledge and understand the context of your topic. What do you need to know? Ask Who, What, Where, When and Why questions. Discuss the topic. Narrow topic to something workable, and restate it as a research question. Identify keywords, synonyms, and related concepts. What are the likeliest sources of information to start?

View research as an open-ended exploration and engagement with information. Tap into your intellectual curiosity, ask questions and be flexible; ambiguity can help the research process.

Do more than one search, examine and evaluate search results. Remember, keywords matter! When you change your keywords, you change your results. Identify subject headings assigned to relevant search results you find. This may result in re-focusing your topic.

Evaluation is a continuous and essential process.

Find Articles
(peer reviewed or popular)
Tool: Articles (Databases)
STLCC Libraries

Explore the “all-purpose” and subject specific databases.

Find Books,
eBooks, cds, dvds
Tool: Search the Online Library Catalog
STLCC Libraries

Search the Web
Evaluate the quality of websites, blogs, etc. before using as a source.

Document (Cite)
Information Sources
Tool: Citing Sources
STLCC Libraries

Document (Cite) information sources in the required citation style (APA, MLA, etc.) for a bibliography, references or Works Cited list.

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Reference Librarians are research experts and welcome questions. Ask for Help!