



## Beginning Research Guide

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### Choosing a Topic

Try to choose a topic that is of interest to you. Possibilities include:

Current event	Famous person	Social issue
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You can find specific topics in outside sources that include:

Your textbook	Encyclopedias	Your instructor
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### Background Information

If your topic is new to you, you can find background information in the library's **Reference Area**. It includes **subject encyclopedias** that cover specific topics and give concise overviews. On the library website ([library.ualr.edu](http://library.ualr.edu)) you can find reference material online, too, in Oxford Reference Online: *Library homepage* → *Articles & Databases* → "O" under "Display by Letter"

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### Books

To search for books you will use the online library catalog: *Library homepage* → *Online Catalog*.

There are four ways to search:

- **Keyword** – Type a topic description (like in Google)
- **Author** – Type last name first
- **Title** – Type the partial or entire title
- **Subject** – Like keyword search, but topics have been arranged by experts

### Online Books

If you only want electronic books—which do not require a visit to the campus to check out—you can search the following found in *Articles & Databases*:

- eBrary
  - NetLibrary
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### Magazine & Newspaper Articles

To locate articles from **periodicals** (magazines, academic journals, and newspapers) go to *Library homepage* → *Articles & Databases*. They are many databases but some good ones to start with include:

- **Academic Search Complete** – A good place to start for most topics
- **Lexis-Nexis Academic** – For newspaper articles
- **JSTOR** – A reliable source for academic articles
- **Business Source Complete** – For business topics
- **Health & Wellness Reference Center** – A good resource for health related topics

As you use the databases, remember these tips:

- Please give the computer time to retrieve and print the article. Remember that **PDF** articles print differently.
- The library printer uses a print control system. You will be prompted to name your **print job**. Release your print job by logging into the print manager computer. UALR students receive 25 free prints every semester.
- Many of the articles that you may find are online in **full-text**, but not all are. Some articles are in print journals on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor and some are on **microform** on the 5<sup>th</sup>.
- Check to see what print magazines that the library owns before you go upstairs to the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. You may verify our holdings in the online catalog.

**Using databases from off-campus:** You must be currently taking classes at UALR to have off-campus access. To log in use your username and 14 digit library number (found on the back of your UALR ID card). Example: Username: *absmith* Password: *12345000006789*

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## Style Manuals

Your instructor will usually require you to follow a particular formatting style in writing your paper. The following styles are commonly used by the UALR faculty and current how-to manuals are found at the Reference Desk.

- **MLA** – *Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*
- **APA** – *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*
- **Chicago** – *The Chicago Manual of Style, 15<sup>th</sup> Edition*
- **Columbia** – *The Columbia Guide to Online Style, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*
- **Various** – *Keys For Writers, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition*

## Citations

Your instructor will require you to have a bibliography at the end of your paper. This is a list of materials that you have consulted to write your paper and will follow the styles mentioned above. In order to credit others for ideas and quotes—and avoid **plagiarism**—you must have the following information:

- Author
- Title of book or journal
- Title of article in the journal
- Volume number, issue number, page numbers, date (for journal articles)
- Publisher, publishing place, date (for books)
- Online access information

The library also has style and citation information on its website: *Library homepage* → *Internet Reference Resources* → *Style Manuals*

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For help contact a librarian at **569-8806** (voice mail and TDD) or **1-800-340-9367**