Choose a topic: What are you researching? Don’t bore yourself. Pick something that you find interesting.

Develop search terms: What are some keywords? Synonyms or alternative expressions? (Doing background research can make this process easier, we can’t all be experts on a given topic—consult Wikipedia, an encyclopedia, or a reference database via the library website, http://campus.albion.edu/library/, to come up with some related keywords.)

Keywords: __________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

Synonyms/Alternative Expressions: ______________________________________

________________________________________________________

Find Relevant Resources: Find physical and electronic resources using LibrarySearch on the Albion College Library website. Use the Database A-Z link to search within a particular database. You can access all online resources from home using your Albion College network username and password. Some popular databases include:

Reference
-Gale Virtual Reference Library

General/All Subjects
-ProQuest Central
-JSTOR
-Academic Search Complete

Biography
-Biography Reference Center

Contemporary Issues
-CQ Researcher
-Opposing Viewpoints
-New York Times

Too much information? Narrow your results by adding a geographic region, time frame, population group, discipline, etc. Use AND between keywords.

Too little information? Is your topic too recent? Are your search terms too specific? Come up with some more general keywords. Use OR between keywords.

Evaluate your sources: Put ‘em through the CRAP detector.
- Currency—how current is the information?
- Reliability—are there references or sources?
- Authority—who is the author, what are their credentials?
- Purpose/Point of View—is it fact or opinion, is it biased?

It’s only right if you cite: Don’t know how to make an APA or MLA citation? Don’t scowl, use the OWL!

Purdue University’s Online Writing Lab, https://owl.english.purdue.edu/, contains information on APA and MLA styles. Learn how to format your paper, do in-text citations, create reference citations, and more! WHOOOOOO knew?!?

Most databases have a citation tool. Remember to double-check for accuracy.