

FAQ: Research

Why can't I find information on my topic?

You may need to widen or narrow your topic or use other [keywords/phrases](#).

Why do I need to use a database?

For academic purposes you should prioritize credible and reliable sources. The database companies specialize in locating and organizing a variety of media sources that are vetted for our high school purposes.

What's the difference between scholarly, credible and non-credible sources?

Scholarly sources are written for and by scholars, i.e. academic- university- graduate- faculty, who invest their life's work to research on the topic. They often become experts in the field and remain current on changes. Their work is captured in books and scholarly journals. *Credible sources* are those with a track record of and reputation for presenting facts to the general public. This would be journalists or professionals who maintain an unbiased, information sharing approach. Their work is often recorded in well established newspapers and magazines, some general and books. Non-credible sources would be those sources not defined as "scholarly or credible." Using the [C.R.A.A.P. test](#) on a source will help you determine whether or not a source is credible. Consider the purpose and [role of each source](#) in the [Information Cycle](#).

What's wrong with using Google or A.I.?

Doing a Google search OR using an A.I. tool on a topic is not wrong and could actually be a valuable resource. However, being able to [identify legitimate sources](#) (use the [C.R.A.A.P. Test](#)) in our times of overwhelming information is challenging. It is a skill which requires that media consumers be savvy and resourceful about valuing [fact-based information from experts and other knowledgeable professionals](#) that don't have ulterior motives and exaggerated bias. It requires a [focus on balanced news and identifying media bias](#) in a simplified way(in November 2023 the following were *Center/High* for both: PBS, Wall Street Journal (WSJ), Forbes, NewsNation, Reuters, The Hill, BBC. Review [Allsides](#) and [Ad Fontes Media Bias Chart](#) for updated information.

What database can I use?

Our school district invests in the Gale Database resources through our Library Media Services department and this is available to all APS students. There is a link on the [Ellet Virtual LRC](#) website or you can go through the APS Portal. Of course you can also use the larger, state-funded [InfOhio database for 9-12](#) (try Academic Search Premier) or an even larger University database, if you have access to one.

Where do I start?

There are many [different methods for starting research](#). So, you will want to follow your teacher's assignment guidelines. However, all "research" processes start with a planning phase that begins with identifying the problem or topic. As you consider a topic, attempt to form a question. This essential question will help guide you to find thorough research answers and therefore a thorough research paper or project. In order to form this question, you will need to

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be familiar with [several keywords and terms](#) related to your topic. Begin with brainstorming a list of phrases related to your topic.