

# How to Research for Your Essays

## 1. Develop Your Search Strategy

What is your topic?	
What is your research question?	
Keywords & Synonyms:	
Scripture References:	
Catechism References:	

**NOTE:** For the purposes of your research the *Bible* and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* are expected resources and should be listed in your final bibliography. However, they do not count as **SOURCES** for your research.



Need help? Contact the CDU Librarian at [library@cdu.edu](mailto:library@cdu.edu) or schedule a 30-min Reference & Research Appointment at <https://tinyurl.com/CDULibraryHelp>.

## 2. Find Primary, Secondary & Tertiary Sources

For more information, visit [Identifying & Using Scholarly Sources](#) in the CDU Online Library.

**General (tertiary) sources that index, organize, or compile other sources to give you a broad overview of your topic or subjects for research.**

Dictionaries: *Anchor Bible Dictionary* or *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*

Encyclopedias: *New Catholic Encyclopedia*

See the CDU Online Library's [Reference Section](#) for more Dictionaries & Encyclopedias.



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**Specific (secondary) sources that analyze, assess, or interpret a historical event, era, or phenomenon; sources that review or critique primary sources.**

Commentaries: i.e. *Jerome Biblical Commentary* or *Anchor Yale Bible Commentaries*

Monographs: a specialist work of writing on a single subject or aspect of a subject

Journal Articles: see the *Atla Religion Database*, *JStor*, or *Theology & Religion Online*



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**Primary sources: the artifacts “provide direct evidence of human activity.**

Papal Encyclicals and Church Documents

Writings of Saints



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### 3. Pull it Together -

- a. Look through the articles you have and take notes on what the authors say.
- b. Introduction: How would you explain your argument to a coworker?
  - i. What is your hook?
  - ii. What is the state of the literature or context of your topic?
  - iii. What is your thesis statement or claim? (Helpful hint: turn your research question into a statement and add the word because and then three important points (premises) you learned.)
- c. Present your argument to support your claim
  - i. What is your first premise?
    1. What evidence supports your premise?
  - ii. What is your second premise?
    1. What evidence supports your premise?
  - iii. What is your third premise?
    1. What evidence supports your premise?
  - iv. Does anyone disagree with your claim?
    1. What is your response to the objections?
    2. Why are their arguments flawed?
- d. What is your conclusion? (Does it follow logically from your premises?)
  - i. Restate your thesis using different terms
  - ii. Summarize the content of your paper.



### 3. Give Credit

- a. Did you include an author's idea in your paper?

Yes  No

If yes, cite the author and text in both your footnotes and your bibliography.

- b. Did you paraphrase?

Yes  No

Check your paraphrase by comparing it to the original source, Is your wording and sentence structure unique?

Yes  No

If yes, cite the author and text in both your footnotes and your bibliography.

- c. Did you include an in-text citation after your paraphrase?

Yes  No

If yes, cite the author and text in your bibliography.

- d. Did you use the exact words from a sentence you read?

Did you put the exact words in quotation marks?

Yes  No

Is there an in-text citation with a page number in the sentence?

Yes: Cite the author and text in your bibliography.

No: Cite the author and text in both your footnotes and your bibliography.



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## 4. Helpful Links and Other Notes

- [Chicago Manual of Style Online](#) Quick Guide:
- [Turabian Paper-Formatting Tip Sheets](#)
- [Strunk and White's Elements of Style](#)



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