

Step 1: Using the OED/dictionaries

1. Which topic (word) have you chosen for your paper?

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- Use **dictionaries (language, etymology, subject)** to explore your topic and identify potential semantic fields to investigate

2. Note three definitions of your word in the OED. Take a look at the examples of use. When was the first instance of each definition?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

3. Click on the “Thesaurus” on the right side of the definition. Scroll to the “Historical Thesaurus.” This works as a semantic index, which is almost a “reverse dictionary.” Take a look and note if there are any interesting semantic connections.

Helpful links:

List of abbreviations:

<http://www.oed.com/public/abbreviations>

Glossary of terminology used in the OED:

<http://www.oed.com/public/abbreviations>

Step 2: Searching the Library catalogue

- Use the Library catalogue to find other **reference works** such as **dictionaries, handbooks, and encyclopedias**.
- Reference works provide a general overview, definitions, key dates, concepts, and ideas, as well as suggested reading lists of books and articles on your topic. *Reference works can be a good place to get a **broad overview of a particular semantic field**.
- **Books** or “Monographs” provide detailed information on your topic and put it in context. Books also have lists of references for further research on your topic.
- **Tip:** Try searching by subject! It will allow you to not only find books by content but also form. Eg. searching “Philosophy dictionaries” in the subject field to find the subject heading “Philosophy -- Dictionaries.”

1. Search for a **specialized dictionary** in the catalogue related to a specific field. (Etymology, political science, literary, philosophy, etc). Note the title and/or call number (eg. PN44.5 .W65 2006) of one relevant resource.

2. Find an **online version** of a reference work. Take a look inside and do a quick search with your word. Does there seem to be a specific entry or section dedicated to this word? What type of information did you find?

Step 3: Searching databases for specific articles

· **Journal articles** have peer-reviewed, scholarly research on your topic. Articles have current, specific, in-depth information and reference lists of articles and books for further research.

· Article **databases** allow you to search, online, within a group of journals on a specific subject.

· Use Databases by Subject to choose a database with journals on those subject areas.

Example: Research question: "What are the psychological reasons for denying that climate change exists?"

Subjects: psychology, sociology, geography

Database Search Tips

- Always choose the **Advanced Search option** – makes it easier to combine search words
- Limit your search to **peer-reviewed** or scholarly article whenever possible.
- Only use one key concept per search box, and combine them with **AND**. Combine a key concept with its synonyms in the same search box using OR. Add one concept at a time to your search.
- * stands for any number of characters, and is useful when you want to find all words that share the same root, i.e. teen* finds teenage, teenager, teenagers, etc.

1. Find an appropriate database for the particular context being investigated (social, political, literary, etc). What were your search terms?

2. Write down the citation information (title, author, etc) from an article that looks interesting/relevant.
