Getting Started

CHOOSING A TOPIC
If possible, choose your topic from a list created by your instructor. Choose something you are interested in. Discuss your potential topic with your instructor. Do some background research to get ideas.

FINDING BACKGROUND INFORMATION
Check general and specialized encyclopedias and dictionaries from the Library's print and electronic reference collection. Your textbook may also be a good source. Browse the shelves in the library to see what books are available. Ask a Librarian and check the Library's Subject Guides for sources of background information. Start a list of keywords that are used to write about you topic; this will help when you search for information. Do a quick search of the catalogue and online databases using your keywords; this will help refine your topic.

REFINING YOUR TOPIC
If you are finding too much information about your topic it may be too broad; make it more specific. If you are not finding enough information about your topic it may be too narrow; make it more general. A shorter paper or presentation should have a narrower topic than a longer one. Try making you topic into a question. For example: Do cell phones cause adverse health effects? Create a thesis statement - a one or two sentence summary of your argument or analysis.

Finding Information

CHOOSING RESOURCES
You need enough resources to support your argument or cover your topic. Include a variety of viewpoints and materials. The Library's Website is a good starting point for choosing resources. Use the Online Catalogue to find books and media and journals by title. Use Online Databases under Search to find articles in magazines and journals. Weblinks provides useful links. Subject Guides give an overview of resources on a variety of topics.

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<tr>
<th>Too Broad</th>
<th>Depression</th>
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<tr>
<td>Too Narrow</td>
<td>Cognitive stimulation therapy as a treatment of depression in the elderly with dementia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Forms of therapy in the treatment of elders with depression</td>
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Source | Good for
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Web | > Addresses & phone numbers > Company information > Government documents > News
Magazines & Journals | > Up-to-date research > Specific topics > Current information >
Books & Videos | > Broad overviews > In-depth discussions

Continued next page
SEARCHING
Theses statements and background information are good sources of keywords for searching.
Use the subjects in online catalogue records and citations in online databases to find more keywords.
Use wildcards to search different endings for words at the same time. For example: in the online catalogue engineer* searches engineer, engineers and engineering
Combining keywords with and narrows a search. Combining keywords with or broadens a search.
Use footnotes and references to lead to additional sources of information.

EVALUATING INFORMATION - SOME QUESTIONS TO ASK
Is it relevant to your topic? Are there critical reviews of it?
How was the information obtained? Are conclusions supported by evidence?
What are the author's qualifications? Are there footnotes or a bibliography?
When was it published? Who is the intended audience (scholarly or popular)?
Who published it? Is it consistent with other sources?

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<th>Scholarly Journals versus Popular Magazines</th>
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<tr>
<td>Scholarly journals include articles written by researchers in a field of study and are intended for an audience with a background in that field. Articles are often peer reviewed and include references.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular magazines include articles written by professional writers and are intended for a general audience. Articles are assigned by editorial staff and often do not include references.</td>
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Completing Your Project

WRITING YOUR PAPER OR PREPARING YOUR PRESENTATION
Start by creating an outline.
Proofread your paper for style and logic as well as grammar and spelling. Practice your presentation in front of a group of friends.
The Library has created a Research Guide to Communications to lead you to further information.

CITING YOUR SOURCES
Every time you use information that is not your own research and is not common knowledge you must cite your source. This includes ideas and opinions, as well as facts.
Citing sources gives support for your argument, lets readers check to your information and gives credit to people whose ideas you have used.
Whenever you use another author's words you must place them in quotes.
Know the style you should be using for your paper. Handouts summarizing the APA and MLA styles are available in the Library and on the web.
Create a bibliography or reference list at the end of your paper.

Finding More About Doing Research

Kwantlen University College Library: Term Paper Research - http://www.kwantlen.ca/library/guides/termpaper.html
Langara College Library: Learn To Do Research - http://www.langara.bc.ca/library/reshelp/reshelp.html