College Writing II: APA

Fall 2025

Updated June 19, 2025

You’re about to begin a semester-long research journey. Conducting research and doing academic writing takes practice. This packet contains instruction, strategies, and exercises to help you learn and master the research process, effective strategies, discipline-specific databases, and AI tools are included. Librarian advice: Accept coaching and allow time for trial and error. If you persist, you will grow!

# Start with what you know

1. **Type your topic/area of interest (in one sentence)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Main ideas (keywords)** |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

1. **Break your topic into the MOST IMPORTANT parts by listing 1-2 keywords that describe the main points of your topic in the top row of this table:**
2. **Next, list narrower or related terms in the shaded rows (above). Add synonyms. You will use these as your search words in the database search exercises on pages 3-5.**

**Next steps:**

# *Research Tips*

# Sources: Where to find them

# Format of topic

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Your topic should | **Simply describe or define** | **Be measurable** | **Be neutral** | **Take a position** |
| **APA** |  | **Checkmark with solid fill** | **Checkmark with solid fill** |  |
| **CSE** |  | **Checkmark with solid fill** | **Checkmark with solid fill** |  |
| **MLA** |  |  |  | **Checkmark with solid fill** |
| **CMS** |  |  |  | **Checkmark with solid fill** |



|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  Okay to use these source types? | **APA** | **CSE** | **MLA** | **Chicago (CMS)** |
| **Background:** Definitions, facts, dates, theories, statistics | Checkmark with solid fill | Checkmark with solid fill | Checkmark with solid fill | Checkmark with solid fill |
| **Original texts:** Novels, scripture, etc. |  |  | Checkmark with solid fill | Checkmark with solid fill |
| **Peer reviewed/research articles:** Review articles, theories, original research | Checkmark with solid fill | Checkmark with solid fill | Yes; use as evidence for your position |
| **Trade magazines** | **?** Possibly—ask prof. |
| **Newspaper & popular magazine articles** | No—unless prof. gives permission |

**Using context clues from the results list**

Use these parts of the results list to improve and revise your searches:

1. **Title:** Skim for relevance to your topic
2. **Subject Headings:** Use these words to improve your next search
3. **Source type:** Confirm the source is what you’re looking for
4. **Abstract:** Skim the summary to confirm this source is worth reading. If so, click on full text or request through Interlibrary Loan (ILL).



# *Database Exercises*

# A screenshot of a computer  AI-generated content may be incorrect.Instructions

1. Go to the College Writing II Library course page: Library.olivet.edu >

Subject Guides >

College Writing II

1. You will explore four databases using your search words on page 1. Allow at least 5-minutes per database.
	* Credo Reference
	* Library Catalog
	* EBSCO eBooks
	* Academic Search Complete

Note: Each database in these exercises has a **special feature that you need to explore.**

You’ll be prompted to **reflect on the usefulness** of each database.

***…reflections require students to reexamine and evaluate the changes in their perceptions, assumptions, knowledge, and understanding in light of the experience… Students can analyze the experience including their own reactions, behaviours and approaches in retrospect, and should be asked to consider what their expectations would be/ how they would approach similar experiences* *in the future*.**

Centre for Pedagogical Innovation. (n.d.). *Role of reflection*. Brock University. https://brocku.ca/pedagogical-innovation/resources/experiential-

 education/role-of-reflection/#1540494768752-5a02f198-73d2

### **Badge 1 with solid fillOpen Credo Reference**

* In Credo Reference, search for background info. In Credo Reference, search for background info. (definitions, theories, key dates & people)
* Narrow your topic using the Mind Map (see screenshot).



**REFLECT**

**Record your thoughts on Credo here:**

*Kind of sources/results:*

*Useful?*

*How? Why not?*

**Library catalog**

* Search for a book. For this project you might only use sections from a single chapter per book.
* Sort results by date to see the newest titles at the top of the results list (see screenshot).



**REFLECT**

**Record your thoughts on the Library Catalog here:**

*Kind of sources/results:*

*Useful?*

*How? Why not?*

*Do you prefer eBooks or print books?*

### A screenshot of a computer  AI-generated content may be incorrect.**Badge 3 with solid fillEBSCO eBooks**: search for eBooks.

Do a keyword search box at the top of the screen to search for an ebook.

* Click on title in results list
* Choose “Access Now (eBook)” to read it online.
* Look for these features (see screenshot):
	+ Table of contents that includes chapter download links.
	+ Search within the book
	+ Citation generator
	+ [Share] a link to this eBook

**REFLECT**

**Record your thoughts on EBSCO eBooks:**

*Kind of sources/results:*

*Useful?*

*How? Or why not?*

**Academic Search Complete**: Task 1: Refine with Subject words. Task 2: Experiment with AI (Natural language search)

**Task 1:** Start by doing a keyword search

* Use filters under search box to limit results to:
	+ Peer reviewed
	+ Published in past 10 years
	+ Academic journal articles
* Click on “All filters” option to open panel with additional limits





* + Scroll to “Subject: Thesaurus Term”
	+ Choose as many as you want

Tip: Use these terms to revise your search words and topic!

* + Click Apply
	+ Skim the results list for relevance. E.g. Ask yourself:
		- Are these articles relevant to my area of inquiry?
		- Interesting to me?
		- Related to each other or wildly different?

**Task 2**: Experiment with AI (Natural Language search)

* Turn on “Natural language search” using the slider
* Type a new search. Use a complete sentence, ask a question, include multiple parts of your topic.



## REFLECT

**Compare the results you got with**

**keyword -vs- (AI-powered) natural language searching in EBSCO:**

*Which search gave you “better” results?*

*Which search helps you organize your thoughts?*

***Evaluate & Revise***

1. **Which search words are NOT working?**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **5. List new search terms\***  | I.  | II.  |  |
| \*Discover by reading titles, abstracts and subject words in database searches |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

**6. Revised topic/position**

**7. Plan your use of subject-specific article databases:**

Visit the Library’s Subject Guides and choose one that best fits your research topic/major:

[Library.olivet.edu](https://library.olivet.edu/index.php) > Subject Guides

*Which Subject Guide(s) could you use for your project?*

*Look at the recommended databases on the next page.*

*Which one(s) will you use when it’s time to find peer reviewed, scholarly sources?*

*Recommended Databases: APA*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Discipline | 1st database | 2nd Database |
| Art & Music | ***Humanities Source Ultimate***  | ***JSTOR Collection*** Note: Before searching, scroll down to “Journal Filter” in order to limit by discipline.***Academic Search Complete*** |
| Business  | ***Business Source Ultimate*** ***ABI/INFORM Global*** | ***Small Business Source***  |
| Communication Theater | ***Communication Source*** | Choose from **Art & Music** recommendations above. |
| Criminal Justice | ***Criminal Justice Abstracts*** | ***Academic Search Complete*** (broader than database in column 1)***Violence & Abuse Abstracts*** (narrower than database in column 1)  |
| Education | ***Education Research Complete*** | ***Professional Development Collection*** |
| EXSS | ***SPORTDiscus*** | ***Academic Search Complete*** |
| FACS | ***Academic Search Complete***  | ***Science Direct*** (Dietetics)***AltHealthWatch*** (Dietetics)***Business Source Ultimate*** (Interior Design) |
| Nursing | ***CINAHL Complete*** | ***Health Source Nursing/Academic Edition*** |
| Psychology | ***PsycARTICLES*** Note: This database is all full text***Psychology & Behavior Sciences Collection*** (good for child and adolescent psychology; counseling) | ***PsycINFO*** Note: This database from the APA is bigger than either in column 1. It contains everything in PsycARTICLES. |
| Social Work & Sociology | ***Sociology Source Ultimate*** | ***Academic Search Complete*** (broader than Socy. Source Ultimate)***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\****Narrower than Socy. Source Ultimate:***Violence & Abuse Abstracts******Family & Society Studies Worldwide*** |
| STEM | ***Science Direct*** | ***Academic Search Complete*** |

## **INFO Desk Hours (1st-Floor, Benner Library)**

##### 815-939-5355 | ONULibrary@olivet.edu | [Schedule an Appointment](https://outlook.office365.com/owa/calendar/BennerLibrary%40OLIVETNAZARENE1.onmicrosoft.com/bookings/s/3ZkzAHMhAUeSV3shOVYFMA2)

#####  **Mon., Tues, Weds, Thurs. Friday Saturday Sunday**

#####  8am-4pm & 6-10pm 8am-5pm No service 6:30-10pm