

RESEARCH

FUNDAMENTALS

STEP 1: Know your topic

Getting started

- ▶ This guide offers tips to help you get started on your assignments.

Understanding keywords

- ▶ Make sure you understand all the words/phrases you have identified:
- ▶ Use a **dictionary**
- ▶ **Textbooks** can provide a good overview of a topic
- ▶ **Wikipedia** can also help define a topic but do not use it as a reference source.

Know your topic

- ▶ Read through your **question** or **task** to ensure you understand it
- ▶ Consider the **objectives** or **purpose** of the subject
- ▶ Read the **marking criteria** carefully
- ▶ Identify the **type of assignment** e.g. essay, report, review etc.

STEP 1: Know your topic

then...

- ▶ Highlight any keywords/topic words
- ▶ Underline any task words (directive words)
- ▶ Identify the scope or focus of the topic e.g. limiting to Australian information only, particular date range or population group
- ▶ Take note of word limit.

Task words

- ▶ Task words provide you with direction on how to answer your assignment questions.
- ▶ <https://student.unsw.edu.au/glossary-task-words>

STEP 2: Search tools & sources

Tips for getting started

- ▶ Identify the **types of resources** you will need i.e. peer-reviewed articles, case studies, books etc.
- ▶ Use your **Reading List** to find relevant books, journal articles etc.
- ▶ Find **one good journal article** and identify potential resources from the list of references.
- ▶ Ensure that you understand the **citation detail** i.e. journal article, book chapter, web page.
- ▶ Develop **search terms** using the keywords identified in Step 1. Consider synonyms etc.

STEP 2: Search tools & sources

Choosing resources for your assignment

The types of resources you choose for your assignment will be governed by the type of information you require. The quantity of resources you require will depend on your level of research, the conditions set by your assignment question, and the complexity of your assignment topic. In some cases you may only need to use one or two different sources. Check your assignment sheet or clarify with your teacher.

Books

- ▶ Good for understanding a topic
- ▶ Can provide in-depth analysis & discussion
- ▶ Check the publication date to make sure information is current

Journal articles

- ▶ Check for scholarly/peer-reviewed
- ▶ Find current research
- ▶ Narrower in focus
- ▶ Reference lists & cited source

STEP 2: Search tools & sources

Conference papers

- ▶ Papers presented at discipline specific conferences
- ▶ Current research

Newspapers

- ▶ Commentary or opinion
- ▶ Overview current events/topic

Encyclopedias /handbooks/directories

- ▶ Useful for defining a topic & background information

STEP 2: Search tools & sources

What's ProQuest Central & ProQuest E-Book Central?

- ▶ ProQuest Central is a superior searching platform that allows users to easily find content, save and manage their research into 'My Research'.
- ▶ The ABI/INFORM Collection is comprised of ABI/INFORM Global, ABI/INFORM Trade & Industry, and ABI/INFORM Dateline. The collection features thousands of full-text journals, dissertations, working papers, key business and economics periodicals such as *The Economist* and *Sloan Management Review*, country-and industry-focused reports, and major news sources like the *Wall Street Journal*. Its international coverage gives researchers a complete picture of companies and business trends around the world.
- ▶ To get started on the ProQuest Platform, please refer to ProQuest Libguides:
<http://proquest.libguides.com/pqc>
- ▶ ProQuest Ebook Central is your resource for Ebooks providing breadth and depth of authoritative content, courtesy of APIC.
- ▶ View Ebook Central Libguides: <http://proquest.libguides.com/ebookcentral>
- ▶ ProQuest & ProQuest Ebook Central content can be accessed via OLS.

STEP 3: Evaluating your information

Read the Abstract

- ▶ Read the **Abstract/Summary** first. This will help you determine whether the full content/article will be relevant.

What is peer-review?

- ▶ A **peer-reviewed** article has been critically assessed by other scholars/academics within the field of study, prior to publication.
- ▶ The process helps to ensure that published work meets a high standard of scholarship and quality that is accurate within the field of study.

Evaluating web resources

- ▶ The internet provides access to seemingly unlimited amounts of information, however, much of it will not be appropriate for your research purposes. To learn more about information quality on the web, explore the many web-based checklists of evaluation criteria. Here is an example:
<http://unimelb.libguides.com/c.php?g=402912&p=2741578#4877722>

STEP 3: Evaluating your information

Tips for evaluating your information

Once you begin to find information, you need to **evaluate** it to ensure it is appropriate for your research.

Here are some basic guidelines:

- ▶ **Reliability** of the source: is it from a scholarly journal, textbook, trade publication?
- ▶ **Authority** of the author: qualifications, experience, affiliated with an institution?
- ▶ **Accuracy** of the information: references listed? spelling/grammar consistent?
- ▶ **Currency/Timeliness**: is the information current/up-to-date/historical information?
- ▶ **Point-of-view**: is a particular viewpoint expressed? Is there bias/opinion presented?

STEP 3: Evaluating your information

Video: Why can't I just Google?

- ▶ Watch this video to learn about the importance of using quality information, and why you can't just Google.



- ▶ Video source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N39mnu1Pkgw>
Library, Latrobe University

STEP 4: Writing

Putting it all together

Now that you have:

- ▶ read and **understood your topic**
- ▶ clarified the **type of assignment** you need to write
- ▶ identified relevant **keywords and phrases**
- ▶ searched **library databases** and other sources for information
- ▶ sifted through and **evaluated the information** you have found
- ▶ ... it is time to start writing that assignment.

And there are plenty of resources to help you.

STEP 4: Writing

Online writing resources

- ▶ [Purdue Online Writing Lab](#) Provides resources and instructional material to help student with various types of writing projects.
- ▶ [Academic Writing Guide UTS](#) A comprehensive guide to Academic Writing by UTS. Divided into four sections: academic writing; assignment types; grammar; research & writing.
- ▶ [Essay Writing](#) Melbourne University has a developed an Academic Interactive Resources Portal. This section is about essay writing.
- ▶ [Writing a Report](#) This is from QUT's CiteWrite and looks specifically at writing a report.

STEP 5: Referencing

Referencing

- ▶ You must **acknowledge** the author's work when you use it in your assignments. Referencing your work correctly is essential to avoid plagiarism.

Referencing guides

- ▶ APIC adheres to two styles of referencing: Harvard Style, and APA Style. Check with your teacher to find out which style is appropriate for your studies.
- ▶ Please refer to "Referencing Guide". This guide will acquaint you with the reasons why you should reference, what types of materials you must reference, and information about many other aspects of the referencing process.

Assignment Type

Types of assignments

Examples of the types of assignments you may be asked to write:

- ▶ Essay
- ▶ Report
- ▶ Laboratory report
- ▶ Literature review
- ▶ Case study
- ▶ Annotated bibliography
- ▶ Reflective journal
- ▶ Critical review