

## TIPS FOR DOING ACADEMIC RESEARCH

The following sources can be helpful for your topic:

- Government websites (i.e. Statistics Canada)
- Magazines (i.e. Psychology Today, Scientific American Mind)
- Newspapers
- Websites (i.e. Vanier Institute of the Family, Centre for Addiction & Mental Health, social organizations that focus on issues relating to your topic)
- Documentaries (i.e. The Nature of Things, PBS, Nova, BBC)
- News Documentaries, News Talk Shows (i.e. The Fifth Estate, The Passionate Eye, TVO's The Agenda)
- Libraries (the real ones & online)

You may not cite the following sources as research for Process #1, or any sources like these:

- Online encyclopedias (including Wikipedia, WikiHow, Encyclopedia Britannica, etc.)
- About.com, Yahoo Answers, etc.
- A student essay published online
- Websites designed to help students with the basics about a topic (i.e. Khan Academy)

If you just Google your research topic or question, you cannot be sure of the quality of the sources that first come up. Be sure to do the following:

- Look for the author's name somewhere. Sometimes their name is a link to their biography, where you can determine whether or not they are an expert by their credentials. If they have a PhD in the area that you are investigating, they are a good source.
- If you cannot find an author, be very suspicious, even if you think the content is good. You have to be able to prove that this is a reputable source. Chances are, if the content is actually good, you can find it somewhere else with an author.
- If there is no author because the source is created by a private organization, be sure to read about the organization first. Go to their "About" or "Home" page on their website. What is their goal? Does the bias of the site impact the credibility of what they have on their site? Do you still feel comfortable passing along the information as "truth" or "fact"? You may have to do a little fact checking if you are unsure.
- If there is no author because it is a government website, it is okay to use.

Other things to consider before you decide to include the source as part of your research for Process #1:

- Unless it is a primary source, do not use anything older than 10 years. That means that no source should be published before 2009.
- If you find a source you think is really good, look at their reference list for other sources that may be of help.
- Your research for Process #1 should not be repetitive across sources. Once you have written down an idea from a source, do not write it down from a different source.
- Do not copy and paste a long list of things from a website to meet the length requirement. It is very obvious what you are attempting to do by just looking at it.

For proper organization and to avoid plagiarism:

- For each source that you find, you should begin creating rough notes/research notes. Do this by putting the APA citation for the source at the top, then put the information that is relevant to your topic and research question in point form below, single spaced. If you are using a physical book, magazine, etc., be sure to include the page number beside each point. You should use quotation marks for anything you are copying word-for-word so that you remember it is a direct quote when you are ready to write your essay.
- On a separate page from your research notes, keep an ongoing list of your sources.