Starting Your Research: Library Research Process

Choose your topic.

Formulate a thesis statement.

Consult a reference book (e.g., subject encyclopaedias, handbooks, etc) to get a broad overview of your topic, keyword ideas, and a list of recommended books and articles on the topic.

Fill out the Building Effective Search Strategies worksheet.

Break your topic into 2-4 keywords that represent your topic's major concepts.

List all relevant synonyms, related terms, and alternate forms for your keywords to identify terms to use in your search strategy.

Select from your list of keywords and build search strings using the Boolean Operators "AND" and "OR" to connect your keywords.

Select appropriate search tools

LIBRARY CATALOGUE
To find TRU Library’s books, videos, government documents, periodical titles, etc.
Note the location and call number for the items you want to find.

ARTICLE DATABASES
aka Periodical Indexes
To find articles from periodicals -- journals, magazines, and newspapers
See the Library Research Guide in your discipline on the library’s How Do I ... page for suggested article databases.
See the guide on telling the difference between popular, trade, & scholarly journals.

INTERNET SEARCH ENGINES
Search the Internet AFTER you have read your books and articles so you will be better able to evaluate the quality of the web information.
See the Library Research Guide in your discipline on the library’s How Do I ... page for suggested web sites.

Implement your search strategies

Evaluate your results. Not getting the results you need? Go back to your keyword list and try a different combination of terms.

NOTE: If you are having trouble, come to your campus library’s Information Desk or email us for help.