



TOPIC SELECTION

- What are the important aspects that your Instructor has asked for in your assignment? (E.g. number of pages, due date, number of peer-reviewed journal articles)
- What are some of the potential topic areas you could research based upon discussions with your Instructor and others?
- Of these potential topics, which is the most promising? (I.e. one that meets all of the assignment criteria, is personally interesting to you, etc.)
- For more information on the process of writing a paper, refer to the library handout [How to Write a Research Paper](#).

PREFOCUS FORMULATION

- What sources of information have you consulted? (E.g. class notes, class textbook, encyclopedia, films, etc.)
- What questions came up as you were researching?
- What aspects about this topic personally interest you?
- What inconsistencies/controversies/varieties of interpretation have you found in what you read?

FOCUS FORMULATION

- Based upon your preliminary research, which topic seemed the best choice for your assignment?
- Compose a thesis statement from which you can start searching for information.

INFORMATION COLLECTION

- Compile the library handouts that will help you choose where and how to start your research:
 - Relevant subject guide (either off the [website](#) or one of the pink sheets)
 - [Recording your Research Strategy](#) handout
 - [Electronic Databases: Timesavers and Tips](#) handout
 - [Boolean Operators](#) handout
- What differences do you find in the quality and quantity of information from different sources?
- What features of the databases helped you be more successful in your search?

INFORMATION REFINEMENT

- As you were searching, did you change strategies? Use different keywords?
- Did you use information from the sources you had already found? (I.e. searched for more articles by the same author, followed up on references from bibliographies?)
- Did you take the time to evaluate the quality of the information you found? If not, try the handout [Evaluating Sources of Information](#).

SEARCH CLOSURE

- Is there any information missing in what you've gathered? This could mean incomplete citations, unidentified sources or quotations, ideas that you don't have the evidence to support, or questions that still haven't been answered. If so, you will need to return to the Information Collection step.
- Of the six phases, which was the most challenging? Which parts were relatively easy? What would you do differently if you could do it again?

