A General Research Strategy

1) **Pick a Topic** - use your text or syllabus, something from the news, or ask your instructor.

2) **Think of Synonyms** - think of different words or phrases to represent your topic. Search using different synonyms to get information from different perspectives.
    For Schools, also try education, training, private schools, public schools, college, universities, or teaching.

3) **Gather Factual Data and Background Information**.

    Use reference books like encyclopedias, handbooks, and dictionaries.

    Information in reference books are put together according to broad subject areas.
    Therefore, if your topic is:

eating disorder	FIND AN ENCYCLOPEDIA FOR	psychology or medicine
filibuster	FIND A DICTIONARY OF	political science
Ernest Hemingway	FIND A HANDBOOK OF	literature
Great Depression	FIND AN ENCYCLOPEDIA OF	history.

    Reference Books will provide the Who, What, When, and Where of your subject

    Sample Titles include: *Encyclopedia of Sociology*, or *Physician's Desk Reference*

4) **Gather information from different perspectives**. Using Books, Articles, or the Web.

Finding Books:

    LILA is our online catalog, which allows you to locate books using authors, titles, subjects, and keywords.

    Two of the search methods on LILA which are useful and easy to use are:

    Word Search: the most comprehensive way to search our collection using one phrase or set of words.
    Name Search: locates all library material by or about a person

    Search Examples:
        Word Search: community colleges
        Name Search: Mark Twain

Finding Articles:

Articles in magazines, journals, and newspapers usually:
- are more specific and focused than books
- are more current
- present interpretations and answer the 'why' parts of questions
- are the most common method that research findings are presented.

Finding Articles at the HCC Library:

Academic Search Premier – (1984 - present). Search this database for information on many topics including social sciences, humanities, science, and education, found in over 7,962 journals. More than half of these journals are available in a full-text format. Academic Search Premier allows you to print, download or email the articles.

Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe – (1980 – present). Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe is a collection of databases which provide articles and information from over 4000 sources. Information sources include news, business, and legal sources. Information is available to download, print and email.

World Wide Web

Methods to find useful Web sites:

1) Use a directory site which lists and organizes Web sites by subject.
     Librarians' Internet Index: lii.org/   or
     Digital Librarian: www.digital-librarian.com

2) Use sites with search tools allow you to search for individual words or phrases of your choice. Be sure to read the help screens for specific instructions.
     Google: www.google.com   or
     Yahoo: www.yahoo.com

5) **Evaluate what you find**. **Some criteria to evaluate information include:**
     Accuracy –   Is the source and author identified or cited?
     Authority –   Does the author, publisher or source seem credible or reputable?
     Objectivity –   Can you detect a bias? Does it only advocate one side of the issue?
     Currency –   Is the content up-to-date? Are publication dates available?
     Coverage –   Is the topic covered in depth? Is it missing an important element of the issue?

**Please be sure to check with a librarian
if you have any questions or need further assistance.**