

Researching I

Goal: This Directed Learning Activity is intended to introduce you to researching using search engines, and will help you become familiar with terms, definitions and applications of the concepts surrounding the topic.

Activities: This portion of the Directed Learning Activity is meant to be done independently. This portion will include activities such as exercises, games, power point presentations, and/or other lessons that show applications of the topic. You should print all materials used and take notes on anything you learn in this Directed Learning Activity.

1. Most of us, if not all of us, are familiar with online search engines. Perhaps the most well-known of these is Google. We live in the technological age of information availability. If we are ever curious about something, we need only find a computer with internet access. Although, this can sometimes be detrimental. With so much available information, some sources are likely to conflict with other sources; moreover, it is also likely that not all information is reliable. In this exercise you will conduct a search for reliable information.

Using a search engine of your choice, you will conduct a search on one of the following thesis statements, or a thesis statement of your own. You do not have to agree with the thesis statement you choose; consider it a jumping off point for your research.

- a. The television industry is the most powerful industry in history.
- b. Video games have negatively affected youths in the United States of America.
- c. The health care policies in the U.S. should not be changed.

d. _____

2. Now you will choose the key words of your research topic, or thesis statement. For instance, in the following thesis statement, I will underline the key words to be used for conducting my research.

Smoking cigarettes has physiological and psychological effects.

In the sentence, I have underlined what I believe to be the best key words to begin my research. In the statement you have chosen, underline what you believe are the best key words for your research. This can be a subjective task, but here are a few things to remember:

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Words that don't have anything to do with the topic of your research are not likely to benefit you yet. They may, however, be a useful tool as we move forward in conducting our research.

You will not need to use punctuation at this level, but certain punctuation marks may be useful later in conducting research.

If one word is already implied in another word, you may be able to leave it out. For example, in the sentence I chose, I did not underline the word "smoking" because I thought it might be implied in the word "cigarettes." However, if I find in my initial search that much of the information made available to me does not have to do with smoking but only has to do with cigarettes more generally, I may decide to use the more specific word "smoking" in my next search.

Write the words you underlined in the following boxes.

and

and

Now you will rewrite the above line in the search engine you have chosen to use. For example, my line would read "Cigarettes and physiological and psychological effects."

3. You will next have to filter out the information you will not use, based on its reliability. An unwritten rule in researching for an academic work is to avoid ".com" for its lack of academic review and ".org" for its possible bias. For some general guidelines for the reliability of information, cut and paste the following link:

<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Evaluate.html>

4. Now that you have conducted your search, you will need to keep a record of your sources, so that you can find them more easily next time they are needed. Use the lines provided below to write a minimum of five URLs, one for each source.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

Review: With a tutor at the writing center, discuss specific terms, their definitions, and all of the examples you have written. Make sure to be clear about your understanding of the definitions, and the examples you have given. Clarity will be gauged by your use of specific terms you learned during the Activities portion of this Directed Learning Activity. **In order to pass this Directed Learning Activity, you will need to show the five sources you chose to a tutor at the writing center and tell the tutor why you chose each.**