College Writing II: MLA

Spring 2025

You’re about to begin a semester-long research journey. Conducting research and doing academic writing takes practice. This packet contains instruction, strategies, and homework exercises to help students can learn and master the research process including effective strategies and discipline-specific tools. Accept coaching and allow time for trial and error. If you persist, you will grow.

# Start with what you know

1. **Type your topic/area of interest (in one sentence)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Main ideas (keywords)** |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

1. **Break your topic into the MOST IMPORTANT parts. List each keyword in the top row of the table below.**
2. **Next, list narrower or related terms in the shaded rows (above). You will use these as your search words in the database search exercises.**

**Next steps:**

# *Research Tips*

# Sources: Where to find them

# Format of topic

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Your topic should | **Simply describe or define** | **Be measurable** | **Be neutral** | **Take a position** |
| **APA** |  | **Checkmark with solid fill** | **Checkmark with solid fill** |  |
| **CSE** |  | **Checkmark with solid fill** | **Checkmark with solid fill** |  |
| **MLA** |  |  |  | **Checkmark with solid fill** |
| **CMS** |  |  |  | **Checkmark with solid fill** |



|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  Okay to use these source types? | **APA** | **CSE** | **MLA** | **Chicago (CMS)** |
| **Background:** Definitions, facts, dates, theories, statistics | Checkmark with solid fill | Checkmark with solid fill | Checkmark with solid fill | Checkmark with solid fill |
| **Original texts:** Novels, scripture, etc. |  |  | Checkmark with solid fill | Checkmark with solid fill |
| **Peer reviewed/research articles:** Review articles, theories, original research | Checkmark with solid fill | Checkmark with solid fill | Yes; use as evidence for your position |
| **Trade magazines** | **?** Possibly—ask prof. |
| **Newspaper & popular magazine articles** | No—unless prof. gives permission |

**Using context clues from the results list**



Use these parts of the results list to improve and revise your searches:

1. **Title:** Skim for relevance to your topic
2. **Subject Headings:** Use these words to improve your next search
3. **Source type:** Confirm the source is what you’re looking for
4. **Abstract:** Skim the summary to confirm this source is worth reading. If so, click on full text or request through Interlibrary Loan (ILL).

# *Database Exercises*

# A screenshot of a computer  Description automatically generatedInstructions

1. Go to the College Writing II Library course page: Library.olivet.edu >

Subject Guides >

College Writing II

1. You will explore four databases using your search words from #3 (on page 1). Allow at least 5-min. per database.
	* Credo Reference
	* Library Catalog
	* EBSCO eBooks
	* Academic Search Complete

Note: Each database in these exercises has a **special feature that you need to explore.**

You’ll be prompted to reflect on the usefulness of each database.

### **Open Credo Reference**

* In Credo Reference, search for background info.
* Narrow your topic using the Mind Map (see screenshot).



**REFLECT**

**Record your thoughts on Credo here:**

*Kind of sources/results:*

*Useful?*

*How? Why not?*

**Library catalog**

* Search for a book.
* Sort results by date (see screenshot).



**REFLECT**

**Record your thoughts on the Library Catalog here:**

*Kind of sources/results:*

*Useful?*

*How? Why not?*

*Do you prefer eBooks or print books?*

### **A screenshot of a computer  Description automatically generatedEBSCO eBooks**: search for eBooks.

* Click on “Advanced Search” (see screenshot).
* Scroll past the date options to see search boxes dedicated to known citation information: author, title, subject, etc.
* Use one of these fields, or a keyword search box at the top of the screen to search for an ebook.
	+ Click on title in results list
	+ Choose “Read Online”
	+ Click on the “Access Now (eBook)” button to open a large view of the text
	+ Look for these features (see screenshot):
		- Table of contents that includes chapter download links. **Chapter downloads are recommended** since downloading the whole eBook requires Adobe Digital Editions download and account.
		- Download restrictions/permissions for this book
		- Search within the book

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**REFLECT**

**Record your thoughts on EBSCO eBooks:**

*Kind of sources/results:*

*Useful?*

*How? Or why not?*

**Academic Search Complete**: Generate a rough-draft of your **MLA citation** with the cite tool.

* Do a keyword search
* Click on any title in results list
* On the detailed view, look for the tool icons linked above the title (see screenshot).
* Click on the “Cite” icon
* Use the dropdown menu to choose “MLA 9th Edition (Modern Language Assoc.)”
* Once you learn the correct formatting in class, you’ll know if you need to make corrections before inserting the citation into a paper..

**REFLECT**

**Record your thoughts on the citation tool:**

*Is it helpful to have a citation tool, even if you still have to correct the info provided?*

# *Evaluate & Revise*

1. **Which search words are NOT working?**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **5. List new search terms\***  | I.  | II.  |  |
| \*Discover by reading titles, abstracts and subject words in database searches |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

**6. Revised topic/position**

**7. Plan your use of subject-specific article databases:**

Visit the Library’s Subject Guides and choose one that best fits your research topic/major:

[Library.olivet.edu](https://library.olivet.edu/index.php) > Subject Guides

*Which Subject Guide(s) could you use for your project?*

*Look at the recommended databases on the next page.*

*Which one(s) will you use when it’s time to find peer reviewed, scholarly sources?*

*Recommended Databases: MLA*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Discipline | 1st database | 2nd Database |
| Art & Digital MediaMusic |  ***Humanities Source Ultimate***  | ***Academic Search Complete*** ***JSTOR Collection*** Note: Before searching, scroll down to “Journal Filter” in order to limit by discipline. |
| Theater | Choose from Art & Music recommendations above. | ***Communication Source*** |
| EnglishLiterature | ***MLA International Bibliography*** ***Humanities Source Ultimate*** | ***Gale Literature Criticism******JSTOR Collection*** Note: Before searching, scroll down to “Journal Filter” in order to limit by discipline. |

# Need help?

## **INFO Desk Hours (1st-Floor, Benner Library)**

##### 815-939-5355 | ONULibrary@olivet.edu | [Schedule an Appointment](https://outlook.office365.com/owa/calendar/BennerLibrary%40OLIVETNAZARENE1.onmicrosoft.com/bookings/s/3ZkzAHMhAUeSV3shOVYFMA2)

#####  **Mon., Tues, Weds, Thurs. Friday Saturday Sunday**

#####  10am-4:30pm & 6-10pm 10am-5pm No service 6:30-10pm