



In academic writing, you are expected to provide evidence to support your reasoning. This requires researching and locating relevant sources that will help shape and support your argument.

Research begins by analysing your question or topic, then considering where you need to search and finally refining your search to identify the most relevant sources.

## 1. RESEARCHING SOURCES

- **What:** Identify key words, subjects, topics, names or ideas.
- **Where:** Search on the Library catalogue, online databases, course reserve shelves, reference books, unit outline suggested reading list and/or bibliography, lecture notes, and indexes.
- **Be flexible:** you may have to alter your key words, widen or narrow the scope of your search, or change the location of your search.

Look for reliable sources by considering the points in the checklist below:

<p><b>Accuracy:</b> Is the same information found elsewhere? Is it referenced? Does it 'fit' with what you already know?</p>	
<p><b>Authority:</b> Is the author a respected authority? This is particularly necessary to check when using websites and information on the internet.</p>	
<p><b>Bias:</b> Is the author trying to sell a viewpoint or product? What or who are their opinions formed by?</p>	
<p><b>Breadth:</b> Does the information provide enough detail and is there evidence to back it up?</p>	
<p><b>Currency:</b> Is the information up-to-date?</p>	
<p><b>Compare:</b> Can you compare the information with other sources?</p>	

## 2. READING STRATEGIES

Research usually requires reading a variety of resources and making decisions regarding the value of them for your assignment purposes. There are a variety of strategies that can assist you in reading effectively.

## 3. PREVIEWING

This skill aims at obtaining an overview of the information before reading it by looking at the:

- Title
- Author
- Chapter or section headings
- Introduction, summaries or conclusion
- Contents page

## 4. QUESTIONING

Before beginning to read, ask yourself questions about the material such as:

- Why am I looking at this resource?
- What information am I looking for?
- What are the key words, ideas or thoughts I am looking for?
- What relevance is this information to my studies?



## 5. IN-DEPTH READING

As you read, note the important points, words or phrases. Keep in mind the questions you considered prior to reading and try to find the answers to them as you go. Write a brief summary in your own words when you have finished reading. Determine if the source is pertinent to your needs, and if so, what part of it in particular is beneficial.

## 6. TIME

Always allow enough time to complete your essay without rushing the process. This will allow you to refine your research, and cite and reference correctly thus avoiding accidental cases of plagiarism.

## 7. KEEP NOTES

Keep notes of all the material you read and where the material comes from. Record all the details you need for citing and referencing including the author's name, title of the work, the publishing company and place, the date of publication and any URL or DOI details as necessary. This may take more time initially but will save much time later on and help prevent plagiarism.

## 8. SEPARATE YOUR IDEAS

Always make a clear distinction in your notes as to where your ideas begin and end. This could easily be done with different coloured pens, separate sheets of paper or different computer files. This process will ensure you recognise when you need to cite other people's work.

