

# Linscheid Library User Instruction

## 5 Steps to Better Research



### 1. Get Started

Start by choosing a broad topic

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### 2. Gather Background Information

The best way to begin gathering information is to consult reference sources—especially if your topic is one you are unfamiliar with. Reference sources will give you background information on your topic. In Linscheid Library the references sources are located on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor.

**Start by looking in:**

- Dictionaries
  - Encyclopedias
  - Directories
  - Bibliographies
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### 3. Narrow your Topic

It's important to choose a topic that isn't too broad. You can narrow the focus of your topic by using limiters. Choose at least 3 limiters using the examples below, or you can think of your own.

**Limiters:**

- Time: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Place: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Person or group: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Aspect: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Other limiters: \_\_\_\_\_
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### 4. Form a Search Question

Now that you have your topic narrowed, it is useful to phrase it in the form of a question.

**This helps you to:**

- Clarify your thoughts
- Choose resources that provide answers
- Develop a thesis statement

Question: \_\_\_\_\_

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### 5. Create a list of synonyms or search terms

The last step is to create a list of synonyms or search terms to use when searching for books and articles with the library's electronic catalog and

databases.

A. Identify the key terms and concepts in your research questions

B. Choose related terms for your key concepts

Key Concepts

Related Terms

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### Examples for Better Library Research

1. Topic: Immigration

2. Gather Background Information

3. Limiters:

Time-----Current, 1990-present

Place-----United States

Person/Group-----Immigrants

Aspect-----Higher Education

4. Search Question: How has higher education contributed to the success of immigrants in the United States?

5. Search Terms List:

Key Concepts

Related Terms

Higher Education-----College, University

Success-----Status, Wealth

Immigrants-----Migrants, Aliens, Cubans,  
Chicanos

If you need further assistance, please see a reference librarian.

\*Source: UC Davis Libraries