So You Have To Do Research: Research can be very challenging, but also very rewarding! It is a great feeling after you've produced a piece of work to realize that, through your hard work and research, you know quite a bit more about your subject than you did before. However, leaving a research project until the last minute can make it a stressful experience. Therefore, starting early is always a good idea. Take a moment to write down your previous experience with research and any struggles or successes you've had:

_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Why Is Research Important and How Much Should We Do?

● Research shows that we are engaged with an academic community.
  ○ When we cite sources, we are joining a discussion about the topic.
  ○ Citing sources gives credibility to our statements.
● Research allows us to start to become an “expert” on our topic!
  ○ We should do as much research as is necessary to back our statements.
    ▪ We may be able to come to a conclusion that seems like common sense, but in order to have credibility we must use sources to support our ideas.

Brainstorming and Prompts:

● You will either have a topic you must write on, or you must come up with one.
● This means you may have to do some brainstorming to form an idea.
● Tips for brainstorming and prompts with more open requirements:
  ○ Find something within your topic or field of study that you have always been interested in.
  ○ Find a question you have wanted to have answered.
  ○ Take some time to free-write the thoughts you have had about your subject or topic.
● Here are some tips for a more strict prompt:
  ○ Focus on the keywords of the prompt, and brainstorm an interesting way of looking at them.
  ○ If you have a topic you are really interested in, ask your professor if there is a way you can incorporate it into the project.

Research Questions:

● The main concepts of a paper are the thesis or argument.
● However, for research papers, we should focus on research first.
  ○ Research gives you a deeper understanding of a topic.
  ○ Researching will give us ideas about the subject as we read about it.
● Therefore, start researching first with your question in mind, and worry about thesis and argument later.
  ○ Using a question to focus your research will help structure your reading.
  ○ Answering your questions will help you create a strong thesis.
The answer to your question gained through research is your thesis or argument!

- We can avoid large amounts of revision in later stages of the project by researching first.

Starting Your Research:

When, Where, and How to Start:
- When do we start research?
  - As soon as possible!
    - Research requires large amounts of time, so the sooner you start the better.
- Where do we start?
  - If at home, use the Library website.
  - If on campus, use the Library and the information desk.
  - Wikipedia can be useful for introductory material, but *should not under any circumstances* be used as a source in the final draft of your academic paper.
    - If you decide to use Wikipedia, look for the sources it cites and read those.
- How to start?
  - Brainstorming questions or ideas can help.
  - Free-writing about your subject will help develop the ideas you already have.
  - Creating materials to organize your research will help later on in the process.
  - Search for introductory materials on your topic, and read those and their sources.

The Library’s Main Site:
- library.sfsu.edu has all the tools you need to start your research.
  - Research Guides:
    - These guides can be found via the main page.
    - These guides are research tutorials spanning multiple disciplines.
    - Some of these guides have videos.
  - Articles & Databases:
    - Under this tab you can find access to databases such as EBSCOHost, Lexis Nexis, and JSTOR.
    - There are subject specific databases to help you choose the appropriate database.
  - One Search & Library Catalog:
    - You can use one search, which will search the library catalog and articles and databases.
    - The library catalog searches for books available through the library.
    - Should our Library not have a volume you are searching for, you can check Link+ or ILLiad.

Boolean Logic: Using all of the aspects of a search engine can really help us to search successfully.
- AND: this term is used when to ensure both words are in the text, instead of either/or.
CAMPUS ACADEMIC RESOURCE PROGRAM

Research Synthesis Workshop

- So searching Rome AND slaves will come up with texts that have both the words Rome and slaves in it, but will not show articles that do not have both terms.

- **OR:** this term is used for one term or the other.
  - So searching for Caesar OR Pompey will come up with any text that has one or the other but not both.

- **NOT:** this term excludes a word from the search.
  - So searching Caesar NOT Pompey will search for articles that mention Caesar but make no mention of Pompey.

- **:** the asterisk uses any permutation or conjugation of the word to which it is attached.
  - For example if we searched Economic*, it would also search for Economics and Economical as well.

- **?:** the question mark replaces a letter in the word and searches for any permutation of that word with multiple letters.
  - So searching for wom?n would search for woman, women, and womyn (LaVonne).

- **“ “ :** Quotation marks ensure that the search finds whatever is contained within them in that order.
  - For example, “Roman Empire” would search for the complete term “Roman Empire” and not the separate terms Roman, or Empire. Use these terms in tandem to specify your search!

Do you have a sample question we could use to try a Boolean search? If not, we can use one of the sample questions below:

- How was the Roman Emperor Commodus associated with the decline of the Roman Empire?
- How does urbanization and industrialization affect the San Francisco Bay Area’s watershed?
- How effective is product placement in the film industry on company profits?
- What was Oscar Zeta Acosta’s role in the Chicano movement?

Too General or Too Specific: Finding a topic that is perfect for your length requirement can be tough. Here are some questions to ask about your topics to see if they need adjustment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Too General:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) How much context needs to be provided?</td>
<td>1) If you will need multiple pages of context, it may be too general.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) How many sources am I finding?</td>
<td>2) Too many sources can be a sign of too general a topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) How many pages for adequate analysis and depth?</td>
<td>3) If you believe the length will go over the requirement by a lot, it might be too general.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Too Specific:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Finding too few sources?</td>
<td>1) Too few sources may be a sign to broaden your topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Is your paper going to be too short?</td>
<td>2) This may be a sign to broaden your topic a bit, or do deeper analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Do reputable sources tackle the subject?</td>
<td>3) If only bloggers, non-edu websites, etc. tackle your subject, it may be time to broaden it and search for reputable sources.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Too Few Results: If your search gives you no results or less than 5, you may try to become less specific.
- Too Many Results: If your search gives you 500+ results, it may be time to get more specific.

Examples of General and Specific Topics and How to Revise Them:

Too General: The Roman army and its tactics.

Specified Topics: Roman tactics during the third servile war.
- Caesar’s tactics against Pompey Magnus.
- Roman Tactics in the Punic Wars

- Each of our new topics still fall under the topic that was too general, but are about more specific parts of that topic. By being more specific, but keeping the same key terms, we should be able to narrow our search.

Too Specific: The role of slaves in supporting the Roman hegemony during the reign of Augustus Caesar.

Generalized Topics: Roles of Slave Labor in Ancient Rome
- Economics during the reign of Augustus Caesar
- Augustus Caesar’s economic and servile reforms.

- A search for key terms using this topic will yield some results, but not that many. Furthermore, this may be a topic that could require “original research,” and though that is not a bad thing, it is usually more than is required at the undergraduate level. Instead, be more general and take out some of the specifics.
Useful or Not? Not everything we find in research is going to be useful. This means that when we do research and find sources, we need to prioritize them. Take a moment to write down some rules that you think would help you prioritize the research you have found:
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________
______________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________

Articles: Four major things to assess when looking for a good article:
- The abstract:
  ○ It highlights the article’s main points and summarizes pertinent information.
- Title:
  ○ Titles give a good idea of general concepts covered in the article.
- Place where published:
  ○ Academic sources need to be from reputable publishers such as peer reviewed journals.
  ○ The Journal should deal with our main subject.
- Page numbers:
  ○ Knowing how long an article is will help us to prioritize what we read first.

Books: Three things can really help us see if a book will be helpful:
- The table of contents:
  ○ This will show what kind of topics are covered in chapters, or which essays are included in the book.
- The introduction:
  ○ This section usually outlines the argument and objective of the book.
- The appendix or table of tables:
  ○ This section will show the types of data that the book deals with, as well as some of its own research or facets.

Other Tips:
- Read the first few paragraphs of articles and the introductions of books.
  ○ You should be able to get a good idea of the argument by reading introductory materials.
- If you need to skim, read the topic sentences.
  ○ Topic sentences, the first sentence of the paragraph, usually outline the ideas discussed in a paragraph.
- Check useful articles or book’s “Work Cited” page and see if you can find sources.
  ○ This page contains a lot of other useful materials about similar subjects.
  ○ You can use Web of Science to help you make the process quicker.

Web of Science: This useful tool can be accessed through the library’s articles and databases under the name Web of Knowledge. It is a searchable database that looks for articles in much the same way that
other databases do. The notable difference is that Web of Science allows you to view the works cited list, and perhaps have access to those articles via the database. It also allows you to see who is citing a particular article, and how many other articles cite that specific article.

A Note Citation: If you find yourself citing from a source within a source it would be best to check the relevant style guide (APA, MLA, Chicago) to see how to cite a source within a source. However, if you find a source and read it by using Web of Science or searching a works cited list you are usually allowed to cite that source normally.

Reading the Table of Contents

Reading the table of contents can be one of the most useful practices in assessing whether or not a book has useful information that you need. Many books in academia have titles for their chapters and these titles can be used to assess whether or not that chapter has viable information. Think of the title almost as the topic sentence of a paragraph; it tells you what the content is going to be.

Below are a few examples from the sample questions that were provided at the end of the boolean logic section. The tables of contents below are from books that pertain at least in part to that subject. See if you can read these tables of contents and find out whether or not they have useful information for us.

Our Question: How was the Roman Emperor Commodus associated with the decline of the Roman Empire?

Our Book:
*The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* by Edward Gibbon

Table of Contents

Preface of the Author

**Volume the First**
1. The Extent of the Empire in the Age of the Antonines
2. Of the Internal Prosperity of the Roman Empire in the Age
3. The Constitution in the Age of the Antonines
4. The Cruelty, Follies, and Murder of Commodus
5. Sale of the Empire to Didius Julianus
6. Death of Severus, Tyranny of Caracalla, Usurpation of Macrinus
7. Tyranny of Maximin, Rebellion, Civil Wars, Death of Maximin
Which chapter seems most relevant to our question? Is there also another chapter we should read?

Our Question: How effective is product placement in the film industry on company profits?

Our Book:

Table of Contents:
Introduction
**Part 1: Origin and Reasons for Product Placement**
1. History of Product Placement in Cinema
2. Films Under a Necessary Advertising Influence
3. The Useful Association of Cinema and Advertising
**Part 2: Advantages and Methods of the Use of Product Placement**
5. Professional Recommendations for Effective Placements
6. Respect for a Legal Framework and the Desire for Ethical Practice
7. The Expert Opinion: Jean-Patrick Flande
**Part 3: Branded Entertainment in All Its Forms**
8. Using All Available Vectors
9. Controlling Further Opportunities
**Part 4: Brand Integration**
10. Stage Direction of Brands in the Twenty-First Century
11. Towards a New Strategic Brand Management
Conclusion

Again, which chapters would be the most beneficial for us to read? Is there more than one? Should we Read the entire book?
Our Question: What was Oscar Zeta Acosta’s role in the Chicano movement?

Our Book: Narratives of Greater Mexico: Essays on Chicano Literary History, Genre, & Borders by Hector Calderon
Austin, TX: U of Texas Press, 2004

Table of Contents:

Acknowledgments
Introduction
Redefining the Borderlands: From the Spanish Southwest to Greater Mexico, from Charles F Lummis to Americo Parades
Writing the Dreams of La Nueva Mexico: Rudolfo A. Anaya’s Bless Me, Ultima and the Southwest Literary Tradition
The Emergence of the Chicano Novel: Tomas Rivera’s “y no lo tago la tierra” and the Community of Readers
“Making Famalia From Scratch”: Cherrie L. Moraga’s Self-Portraits

Once again we must decide what chapters to read. Choose what you would read and explain why:
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Final Thoughts About Books:

- If the book seems useful, read the introduction.
  - Introductions can lead you to other sources.
  - Introductions can help you get a general idea of the topic.
  - Introductions will outline the argument of the book.

Abstracts

Abstracts are general overviews of the content in an article and are helpful in determining whether or not an article will be useful. Read and assess the abstracts below using the question provided. All of the abstracts below are fictional.

Question: How does Star Wars represent essential American ideologies?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Abstract</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ayers, Aaron</td>
<td>&quot;Psychology of the Jedi: Luke's Dark Secret.&quot; <em>The Journal of Jedi Narratology.</em> Vol. 1.3 (Fall 2013). p. 42-68.</td>
<td>This article outlines a character study of Luke Skywalker as he tries to fit himself within the ideologies of the Jedi Order. It explores his failures and successes to live in the way of a Jedi, as well as his moral decisions that affect his psyche throughout the trilogy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Byers, Bartholomew</td>
<td>“Star Wars as American Heritage.” <em>The Fictions of a Scientific America.</em> Vol. 23.4 (Summer 2004). p. 110-121.</td>
<td>Byers outlines Luke's journey as the penultimate American boy who travels through a landscape of American archetypes as he traipses through the galaxy. By coming into contact and conflicts with different archetypes from fiction and history, Luke is able to achieve the ultimate goal of Democracy for the rebel alliance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyers, Cybil</td>
<td>“The Good, The Bad, and The Wookie: Star Wars and Morality.” <em>Cinematic Landscapes</em> Vol. 12.3 (Fall 1986) p. 8-35.</td>
<td>Outlining different characters as put into &quot;morality groups,&quot; Cyers attempts to show how American values are transgressed and ultimately reinforced by the Star Wars series. This paper comes to the conclusion that though there are morally transgressive and progressive elements in these films, they ultimately right themselves via an enforced conservative ideology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyers, Danika</td>
<td>“You Can’t Make A Deathstar Without Breaking A Few Legs: Slavery, Servitude, and Selflessness in Star Wars.” <em>Ideologies and Architectures</em> Vol. 6.6. (June 1990). p. 67-90.</td>
<td>The roles of slave labor, indentured servitude, and selflessness are explored throughout the <em>Star Wars</em> trilogy with particular attention to American history. Dyers asserts that the Deathstar is equivalent to the transcontinental railroad, or plantation farming system in American history, and that it could only be made possible via slave labor, which the rebellion clearly struggles against.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After reading these abstracts put a number next to them, 1-4, identifying number 1 as the most useful and number 4 as the least useful. Why did you number the abstracts that way, and what terms or phrases did you think helped show whether an abstract would be useful or not?

_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
Topic Sentences

In the following exercise there are three fictional topic sentences. Try to read each one and infer what the rest of the paragraph would be about.

**Topic Sentence A:** “Though we see Luke as a gifted individual who is able to learn the ways and powers of the force, the opposite can also be seen: a young man forced into a way of life that is not his own.”

**Topic Sentence B:** “Han Solo is representational of that now iconic American archetype the Wild West outlaw, and like the famous outlaws of Westerns, we are unsure whether or not to root for Han or boo him.”

**Topic Sentence C:** “The unsettling ease with which the Deathstar is destroyed perverts the high morality that is supposedly purported by the “light side” and the “Rebel Alliance.”

Reading topic sentences allows us to infer what a paragraph may be about, and whether it is worth reading or not. Furthermore, when we read in such a manner that sets up expectations from the article or book, we are reading with purpose and will absorb more of the material.

Synthesis

**How to Add Research:** Here are some strategies on how to organize your research:

*Annotated Bibliography:* An annotated bibliography is constructed whenever you start researching. While doing research--after you’ve read each book, article, or data set--you make a small one paragraph wrap up or summary of what the argument was, what topics are covered, and how it helps answer your questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citation</th>
<th>My Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ayers, Aaron. “Psychology of the Jedi: Luke's Dark Secret.” <em>The Journal of Jedi Narratology</em>. Vol.1.3 (Fall 2013). p.42-68.</td>
<td>This article is mostly about psychology and the effects it might have on Luke Skywalker as he becomes a Jedi. Ayers' makes some interesting points about the psychology of a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
young male pushed into a lifestyle that are useful in making a point about the amount of repression involved with the Jedi order.


This article outlines a lot of points about the similarities between American culture, archetypes, and Star Wars. The most noticeable comparisons are made to Obi Wan Kenobi as a representative of the American Transcendentalists, Han Solo as a representative of the outlaw-cowboy, and Leia as the fighter for democracy. His points mostly deal with characters, but they are still very useful in thinking about American culture. The best points about the aforementioned archetypes are on page 113, 117, and 119.

Quote-sheet: While you are reading, you may come across quotes that seem useful in answering your question. Instead of just taking a sentence or two, take a large section of the quote so that you will have context for it. Put all of these quotes in the same place so that way you have a good idea of where your argument is going. Furthermore, by keeping track of these quotes now, you will save yourself the time to search for them later.

Example:

“...Though we see Luke as a gifted individual who is able to learn the ways and powers of the force, the opposite can also been seen: a young man forced into a way of life not his own. Instead of living the life of a youth on Tatooine and perhaps even getting a job as a pilot, he must start practicing and adhering to the sets of rules that exemplify the life of a Jedi...” (Ayers 48)

“...it must be understood that the empire shot first when they destroyed Alderaan, but the Deathstar’s destruction signifies a much more corrupt thought process coming from the rebels, and even from Leia and Luke, who purportedly are the heroes of this story. This corrupt thought process is one of polemic agency: one ethos, one ideology, and one rule is correct or good, and the other necessarily corrupt, evil, and bad...” (Dyers 72)

Spreadsheet or Chart: This would be a chart or a spreadsheet in which you would have the names of authors on the x axis and the topics covered in their arguments on the y axis. You plug in either quotes or paraphrases in to the chart so that you have a visual representation of how the arguments overlap and how they are disparate. Here is an example:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Luke, unable to repress his emotions, has them present themselves in the form of the hallucination of Darth Vader in the swamp” (49).</td>
<td>“Luke is a paragon of American values: hard working, loyal to family, and for the democratic cause of the people” (112).</td>
<td>Cyer’s makes many points about the morality at play between the micro groups of Han/Chewie and Luke/Leia (12-21)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Transgressions | Ayers makes the point that Luke does not transgress boundaries because he has not fully formed as a character until the very end of the series (58-61) | “Han Solo is perhaps one of the more transgressive characters, but those transgressions almost always have a ludic quality that is forgiven due to his embodiment of the image of the American cowboy” (116). | “The kiss between Luke and Leia, though mostly for Han’s benefit, eschews a kind of breaking of sexual morality that is forgiven when Luke retires into a forced celibacy as he turns into a Jedi” (25). |

| American Values | Ayers does not really touch on the topic of American values. | Byer’s thesis basically states that Luke is the young American boy who becomes a man by travailing the terrain of American heritage throughout the story. This includes acting with characters who represent distinct American archetypes. | “The representation of Anakin’s ghost at the end of the movie shows that he has been redeemed. This reaffirms an American and Christian value: that through your works and asking forgiveness you can be redeemed” (28). |

**Index Cards**: Index Cards can be used to organize your research notes. They allow for a great deal of flexibility as you move into the outlining and writing phase. An index card should include the name of the author, source, and topic of the notes that follow. On the back of the card, include the full bibliographic information.
**Codification:** Regardless of your preferred note-taking method, having a coding system of some kind--by number, letter, color, or some combination of the three--allows you to have a short-form citation so that you don’t need to worry about formal citations and formatting until you’ve finished your first draft.

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Citation</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ayers, Aaron.</td>
<td>“Psychology of the Jedi: Luke's Dark Secret.” <em>The Journal of Jedi Narratology.</em> Vol.1.3 (Fall 2013). p.42-68. <strong>code: a1</strong></td>
<td>It is only when Luke builds his own lightsaber that he is able to truly confront Darth Vader. His agency “comes from the reclamation of his own phallus—the lightsaber—as opposed to using his father’s masculinity—his lightsaber—as a precedent for his manhood” (a1).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Before you add these ideas to your research, think about how all of the research answers your questions. What kind of conclusions can you come to? Are there any other further questions? Lastly, is there a definite statement you can make that answers the initial question you asked?

**Guess What?** The answer to your initial question is your thesis. It may need some cleaning up and rephrasing, but your argument is the answer to the question you asked, using the research as sources! However there is more that may need to be done.

**Needing More Research**
- You may need more research if the following circumstances apply:
  - If you find yourself making assertive statements, but do not have a source to back that statement.
  - If there are holes or gaps in your argument where more data could provide greater context and a more complete analysis.
  - If you have statements that you feel are true, but lack the evidence to assert their truth.
    - You may come to logical conclusions based on other evidence, and that is ok.
    - However, it is not acceptable to infer that an idea is “common sense”. You must either prove it through logical writing, or by citing a source.

**If You Need Additional Research:**
- Go back over sources you have already cited and read.
  - After we write out our thoughts, we sometimes see things in articles, books, etc. that we had not seen before.
- Use Web of Science, or search the works cited pages of your sources.
- If you are short on time, it may be better to cut out a part of your argument.
  - A weaker part of an argument, even within a well-crafted paper, can have an impact on the overall quality of the paper.
Helpful Hands: The Library has several helpful ways to aid you in your research efforts:

- IM Services: available through library.sfsu.edu.
- Email Research Assistants.
- Person to person research assistance: walk in / scheduled consultation.
- Telephone assistance for quick questions at: 415-338-1974

This information can be found at: http://www.library.sfsu.edu/research/library/asklib.php
You can find online guides at: http://www.library.sfsu.edu/research/guides/guides.php

- Furthermore, here at CARP we can always help with research and brainstorming, or basically any of the concepts covered in this workshop!
  - **CARP Hours:** Monday-Thursday 4 P.M.-8 P.M. Friday 11 A.M.-2 P.M. Room: HSS 344
  - Appointments can be made 24 hours to a week in advance via phone at (415) 405-0971
  - You can visit our website: www.sfsu.edu/~carp1 or E-Mail us at: carp1@sfsu.edu If you have any questions call or visit our administrative office: (415)405-0316 or at HSS 346

