

Searching With A Purpose Exercise

This assignment is designed to help you start and refine a search for articles related to your research focus.

1. Keywords and Related Terms

A. Write something that interests you in the top part of the box below. Even if you're not sure exactly what you're going to be researching, write down your ideas.

B. Write down some important keywords and other terms that have to do with your question, focus, or ideas. (Example: interest: *Why is there so much controversy over global warming?* keywords: *climate change, environment, green, pollution, Kyoto, etc.*)

| |
|------------------------------|
| Question or Interest: |
| Keywords: |

2. Starting Searches

- A. Using your keywords, try searching for some articles in the ProQuest database through the MSU Libraries' Electronic Resources page:
<http://er.lib.msu.edu/item.cfm?item=001118>
- B. In the following table (next page), under "Search #1," write down exactly what you typed into the search box.
- C. How many hits did you get? (Under your search box, you should see the number of documents found- or you should see a page that says there were no results.) Record this number under "Number of hits" in the table below.
- D. Are there any new keywords that you found from doing your initial search that you hadn't thought of before? Record these terms in the "New Terms" box below.
- E. Are there any words that you wouldn't use again in your search, or were not helpful? Record these words in the "Words that were not helpful" box below as well.



| Search #1 | Number of hits | New Terms | Words that were not helpful |
|-----------|----------------|-----------|-----------------------------|
| | | | |

3. Refining Searches

- A. Try another search. If you got fewer than 200 results in your first search, try to broaden your search to include more results. Use terms like OR with your keywords. If you got more than 200 results, try to narrow your search by using different keywords or terms like AND. Record the results of your search in the box below. Keep your search results up on the screen.


| Search #2 | Number of hits | New Terms | Words that were not helpful |
|-----------|----------------|-----------|-----------------------------|
| | | | |

- B. Was this search helpful to you? Why or why not?

4. Using Suggested Subjects

- A. Go back to the results of your last search. Try clicking on one of the “Suggested Subjects” near the top of the page. Record your results below.

Suggested subjects ■ Global warming ■ *Global warming ■ Global warming AND Climate change ■ Global warming AND Greenhouse effect
 ■ Global warming AND Carbon dioxide ■ Global warming AND Greenhouse gases ■ Global warming AND Climatic changes

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| Suggested Topic | Number of hits | New Terms | Words that were not helpful |
|-----------------|----------------|-----------|-----------------------------|
| | | | |

- B. Was using the Suggested Subjects links useful to you? Why or why not?

5. Reflection

- A. Choose the three best articles that you found from any of your searches. Write a brief bibliography with MLA citations for the articles. Explain why you thought these articles were the best that you found.

ARTICLE 1:

ARTICLE 2:

ARTICLE 3: