

How to research - transcript

Slide 1: Researching can seem like a overwhelming task, after all, there is so much information out there and you don't always know if it is appropriate or not. Sometimes it can feel like what you are looking for just doesn't exist. This presentation has been designed to provide you with a kick start to researching. It can be paused, rewound, fast forwarded and stopped at any point. It is recommended that you take notes as you go through to make sure you are actively learning.

Slide 2: The key to sorting through the masses of information out there is targeted reading. A good starting point is to make a list of things you already know about your topic. Targeted reading involves being selective, you can't possibly read every piece of information on a topic out there and finally, make sure that the evidence you find supports your ideas, not replaces them.

Slide 3: Here is an example to think about. How might you develop your own ideas? These ideas may be based on your experience so far, information you have gathered from your lectures, areas that interest you and you would like to look at further and notes about points that you don't understand yet.

Slide 4: So what do you want to find out? This can be a tough one. You can tackle this by thinking and creating questions about the topic you have been asked to research, this will direct your search. Decide from your plan where the gaps in your knowledge are, what parts you will need to support with evidence and where you will need to form counter arguments. If you haven't made a plan yet or don't know how to make a plan. Pause this presentation and head over to the plan section to find out more.

Slide 5: Remember you don't need to read everything, be selective, you may wish to start with a book, if that is what you are more familiar with and work your way up to journal articles. It is recommended to make minimal use of websites when referencing, doing so can reduce your overall mark.

Slide 6: When knowing whether a source is credible, or good to use, you can employ the craap test. Using the craap test encourages you to think about the source you have selected and come to an informed decision about whether or not to include it in your work. You need to think about the following; is it up to date? Ideally you want to be looking at sources produced within the last 5 years up to a maximum of 10 years. This is not true for all subjects but Science is very dynamic and new discoveries are being made continually so it is important you stay current in your research. Is it relevant? Does it meet the aims and objectives of your writing? Authority, is the writing credible? Has it been peer reviewed? Is the source accurate? How reliable is the source and does it appear to speak the truth? You may wish to look for signs of bias at this point. Lastly, why does this piece of information exist? Does it meet its own aims, does it make a significant contribution to the scientific community?

Slide 7: It is tempting to just sit down and read and while this is not wrong, it is passive learning and this often does not stick. To be active while researching, it is highly recommended to take notes, annotate texts and highlight key points you wish to include, along with making a plan. This is also an opportunity for you to look up any definitions or key terms that you do not understand. It is important that when looking at journal articles for example, you are not put off by their complexity, everyone struggles to read them, you are no different, but by being active in your research, you can make sense of them and be able to include important points in your own writing. Remember, as you are researching, keep an accurate record of all sources, this will support you when it comes to referencing.

Slide 8: Here are some top tips for active reading. You may wish to pause at this point and make a note of these.

Slide 9: When adding your evidence to your plan it is recommended to think about how you want to structure your paragraphs. Start with thinking about the point you want to make, what evidence have you gathered to support this point? How does this evidence support your point and how does it link to your assignment title?

Slide 10: We previously mentioned keeping a record of evidence. When doing this it is important to be detailed, you need the full details of the source, what search terms you used to find it, if using Summons or the internet and the location of the source, was it a journal article, was it a book? And so on.

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Slide 11: If you are struggling to find evidence for your writing, there are lots of options here at the University. For general information about the library, using hud.ac.uk/library will give you full details. The last two links are for using and help with Summons. If you are wondering, Summons is a search engine for academic sources, which the University has paid to have full student access to these resources. If you have attempted to use Summons or the library and you are still unsure, you can contact your subject librarian who will be happy to help.

Slide 12: So to summarise, when researching, start with your own ideas and what you already know, this will enable you to highlight gaps in your knowledge and understanding. Start looking for evidence, using the library and Summons for this is an excellent start. Don't just read, be active to support your understanding and last ly, always keep a record of your research, it will save a huge amount of time when it comes to referencing. If you require further assistance or have any questions, contact your subject librarian or you Academic Skills Tutors, remember, you will be asked what you have tried first so have a go, you may surprise yourself.