

FINDING THE RIGHT SOURCES



FIRST METHOD FOR DOING RESEARCH



DATABASE METHOD

Start by choosing the database best suited to your topic.

Gaston College lists their databases alphabetically and by subject (as do most colleges).

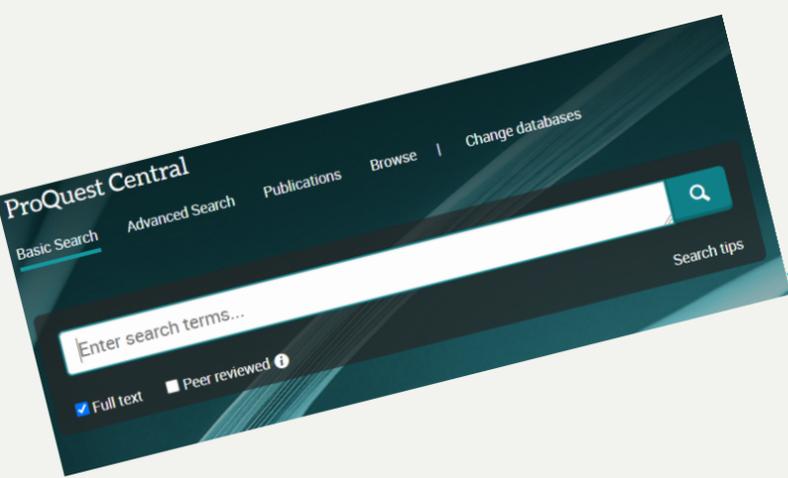


Databases

Databases by Subject
Databases by Alphabet
Periodical Search
Periodical List



gaston.edu/library/



DON'T BE AFRAID TO TRY MULTIPLE DATABASES!

Try databases that include a wide variety of topics as well as databases that are more specific. ProQuest Central is a great general database.

ONCE YOU CHOOSE A DATABASE, TYPE YOUR KEYWORDS INTO THE SEARCH BAR.

Keywords are the "key" to you finding what you need. Keywords should be specific words and phrases meant to bring up information on your subject. They should **never** be complete sentences. Try using synonyms or related topics to find as much information as you can.

Example: If your topic is global warming, try searching for any of the following: global warming, climate change, greenhouse gases, emissions, fossil fuels, etc.

FROM THERE, YOU CAN NARROW YOUR SEARCH TERMS TO FIND MORE RELEVANT ARTICLES.

ProQuest Central
Basic Search Advanced Search Publications
climate change and law
1,077,951 results

ProQuest Central
Basic Search Advanced Search Publications
climate change and the United States
1,773,513 results Modify search

ProQuest Central
Basic Search Advanced Search Publications
climate change and natural disaster
241,707 results Modify search

USE THE WORD "AND" TO SEARCH FOR ARTICLES TO INCLUDE MULTIPLE IDEAS OR IN ORDER TO BE MORE SPECIFIC.

Example: climate change and the United States; climate change and natural disaster; climate change and law

NARROW YOUR SEARCH EVEN FURTHER BY USING THE FILTER.

This bar is commonly found on the left side of the screen and will filter results by whether the source is peer-reviewed, the publication year, the type of source, and whether the source is accessibly immediately online.

Add quotation marks to look for specific phrases!

Use these sources to build your academic, researched argument!



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SECOND METHOD FOR DOING RESEARCH

GOOGLE METHOD

Start by searching Google with the same method of finding and using keywords related to your topic

Try using Google Scholar for more reputable, scholarly sources!



SINCE GOOGLE DOES NOT GUARANTEE THAT A SOURCE IS LEGITIMATE, MAKE SURE TO ANALYZE THE LEGITIMACY OF EACH SOURCE.

PEER-REVIEWED SOURCES ARE SOURCES THAT HAVE BEEN REVIEWED BY A PANEL OF PEERS IN A FIELD RELATED TO THE ARTICLE'S SUBJECT.

For example, a peer-reviewed paper on climate change would most likely be reviewed by a group of scientists who have done work on the subject before.

They review the paper to look for any **biased** or **inaccurate information** on the subject.

PEER REVIEWED ARTICLES ARE HIGH QUALITY AND CAN USUALLY BE TRUSTED TO HAVE ACCURATE INFORMATION.

Who is the author and what do we know about them?

Can we trust the author?

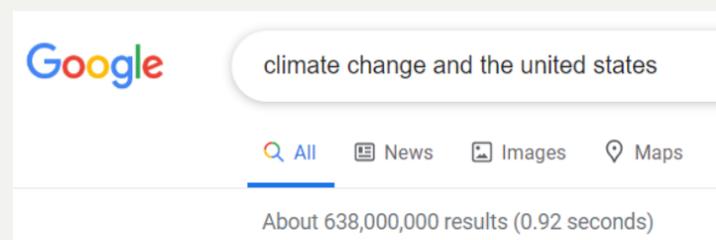
What is the tone of their writing?

Can I find the information they are giving me elsewhere?

Is this source I am using from a government website, a school, a blog, a news outlet, or some other source?

If this writing is informal, does that make the source less trustworthy?

THE MAIN PROBLEM WITH GOOGLE IS THAT THE SOURCES FOUND ARE NOT PEER-REVIEWED. ANYONE CAN POST ANYTHING!



COMMON WEBSITES THAT ARE NOT APPROPRIATE FOR RESEARCH INCLUDE PSYCHOLOGYTODAY AND WIKIPEDIA.

HOW NOT TO SEARCH? GOOGLE - FIRST ANSWER

Never stop with the first source you find on a database or a search engine like Google. Research is a process that requires you to go through multiple articles in order to find ones that fit. To avoid being overwhelmed, browse through any article that sounds like it might be helpful from the title. When searching on Google you may find several sites with similar information. Rather than using a small amount from all of them, choose the site you believe to have the most accurate, and in depth information. The goal is to find the highest quality research, not to simply meet assignment guidelines for a number of required sources.

RATHER THAN RELY ON WEBSITES LIKE THESE, EVEN THOUGH THEY ARE EASIER TO UNDERSTAND, USE A DATABASE TO FIND THE ORIGINAL RESEARCH AND READ IT FOR YOURSELF. IT IS ALWAYS BETTER TO FIND AND READ THE ORIGINAL STUDY.

Be wary of sites like Psychologytoday that seem trustworthy but are just online magazines. While they may present interesting scientific ideas, that does not mean these ideas are accurate. Blogs like Psychologytoday may interpret scientific articles incorrectly to be entertaining and leave out important pieces.

While Wikipedia is a great place to read general information, it is not appropriate for a research paper as anyone can post anything they would like. The information posted is hard to track back to an author, and an author is important to determine how legitimate the information is.