



**Kankakee Community College**  
**Learning Resource Center (LRC)**  
**General Research Tips**

**Critical Evaluation** – There are five areas of critical evaluation (PACAC) to consider prior to using a resource, particularly from the web. If the above five points cannot be answered for a resource, then it should not be used:

1. **Purpose** - Why was the book/webpage created? To sell a product, inform the public, promote a specific point of view?
2. **Authority** - Who wrote the book/webpage or produced it? On a web page check for the “about this website” link. Is this person or organization considered an expert in this field? How do you know the person or organization is an expert
3. **Currency** - When was the book/web page produced? Does it contain the most recent information? Does the most recent information matter for your topic?
4. **Accuracy** - How accurate is the information? How do you know its accurate?
5. **Content** - What is the book or web site about? Is it useful to your topic?

**Choosing and Searching a Topic:**

1. Pick a topic of general interest, if possible.
2. Use the “Advanced Search” to add multiple terms in one search.
3. **Keyword** searches are broader than **Subject** searches. Depending on the search, it may work well to “mix-n-match” **Keyword** and **Subject** searches. Example:
  - **Subject** – Truman, Harry S.; **Keyword** – Marshall Plan
4. Make your search as narrow as possible. Search a specific aspect/type of a topic rather than the topic in general. Here are some examples.
  - Instead of searching “drug abuse,” search “cocaine,” “alcohol,” “heroin,” etc.
  - Put the topic (e.g. “drug abuse”) in one field and narrowing aspect(s) in another (e.g. “teenage” and/or “causes”)

**Finding information through the Library web page:**

1. To access the KCC Online Catalog, go to <http://www.kcc.edu> - use the “Library” link under “Resources,” then select “KCC Online Catalog” from the menu on the left.
2. Searches may be conducted by “Any Word Anywhere (Keyword),” “Title,” “Author,” “Subject,” etc., or patrons may use the “Advanced Search” tab.
3. Searching books:
  - Use the **Advanced Search** tab to add multiple terms in one search.
  - Sort the list by newest titles first.
  - For titles of interest, click the title and view the book’s contents, bibliographical information, and call number.
  - Use the call number(s) to locate the item(s).
  - Books may be checked with valid KCC Student ID.
  - Please feel free to ask any LRC staff member for assistance.

## E-Journals and Newspapers – KCC general article databases:

### 1. Thomson-Gale: Expanded Academic ASAP

- Off campus, the password is the barcode on your KCC id.
- When a list appears, choose **Expanded Academic ASAP, Opposing Viewpoints, Gale Virtual Reference Library**, or all three.
- Patrons may also use **Literature Resource Center** for literary research.

### 2. IDAL: EBSCOhost

- Off campus, the password is the barcode on your KCC id.
- Choose 'Full Text Journals'
- At 'Choose Databases', select appropriate databases and press continue.
- Search tips:
  - a. Check the 'full text' box.
  - b. Optional: Fill in the 'year of publication' or 'published date' ranges.
  - c. Use '**AND**' between your topic (or phrases) and your subtopics or narrower terms
    - Sample: Drug abuse AND teens

### 3. FirstSearch

- Call the circulation desk for the authorization and password.
- Select "List All Databases" link. You could also enter the search first and select from a list of databases.
- For articles select either **Article First** or **Wilson Select Plus**
- Enter your search in **Keyword** or **Advanced** searching

## Tips for Viewing Results:

- HTML items contain the full text of the article.
- PDFs are copies of articles but these are more like scanned images. These will include the best charts and will take longer to load than HTML articles.
- Use the print icon closest to the text (instead of the browser icon).

## Reference Online:

1. From the KCC homepage, select "Library" then select "References online" from the list on the left
2. These sources provide information on a large number of topics
3. Excellent resource for comparative information, statistical data, biographical information, or an overview of a specific topic.
4. Online sources available include:
  - **Gale Virtual Reference Library**
  - **Sage E-Reference**
  - **Oxford English Dictionary**

The Web - The web is a good source of information as long as the accuracy of the information, authority of the web page producer, currency and content of the web page are considered.

1. Web pages assembled by librarians which have been reviewed for quality, authority and accuracy.
  - Librarian's Index to the Internet – <http://lii.org>
  - WWW Virtual Library – <http://vlib.org>
2. Government sites (.gov) and well known non-profit organizations (.org) information can be timely and useful. Examples include:
  - American Cancer Society – <http://www.cancer.org>
  - Bureau of Labor Statistics – [www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov)
  - National Library of Medicine/National Institute of Health – [www.nlm.nih.gov](http://www.nlm.nih.gov)