Determine Your Research Needs

- **Begin research by determining your research needs:**
  - Identify the issue. What is your purpose statement? What is the central idea for your speech? List both statements here:

- Perform preliminary background research using multiple sources (library databases, books, journals, local experts, etc.). Take note of additional terminology and suggested terms. List important or key ideas, terms or people relevant to your topic:

- Revise/Refine your approach to the issue based on what you learned during your preliminary research. You may have chosen to focus more narrowly, or broaden, your speech. List your revised issue here:

- Generate additional keywords for your issue. Think in both more specific and broad terms. List as many relevant synonyms as you can:

- List the types of supporting material you will need for your speech, including common knowledge, personal experience, examples, testimony, and statistics.
Take Your Research to the Library!
Using your answers to the questions on the first page, refine your research. Remember to keep track of the sources you find for future reference. Good research relies on the belief that the work of others is ethically cited...practice this routinely as part of the scholarly process!

Be sure to record important information like title, author, year of publication, volume and issue, page numbers, publisher and URL.
You will need this to build your bibliography.

Locate and Access Sources & Produce Support for your Speech

Cite the Source

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Evaluate the Source

Authority: Who is the speaker or writer? What are his/her credentials? Who, if anyone, sponsors the information? What is the reputation of the publisher?

Recency: Is the information reflective of current knowledge? Is the recorded date reflective of the information?

Objectivity: What is the author’s self-interest, bias or opinion?

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**Tools for Scholarly Research**

### Key Concepts

- **Keyword:** A word that serves as a crucial ('key') element in a usage, phrase, sentence, text, subject, concept, theory, or language.

- **Citation:** Reference to (a passage, book, or author) as evidence for or justification of an argument or statement, especially in a scholarly work.

- **Abstract:** A summary of a statement, thesis, paper, or other document, usually providing its gist (essential elements and argument).

- **Database:** A large collection of information that has been coded and stored...in such a way that it can be extracted under a number of different category headings.

- **Peer-Reviewed:** The process used by publishers and editors of academic journals to provide a chance for scholars to examine and critique a paper or monograph before it is published to help ensure its integrity and veracity.

- **Copyright:** The exclusive and assignable legal right, given to the originator for a fixed number of years, to print, publish, perform, film, or record literary, artistic, or musical material.

### Source Analysis

- **Bias:** What is the author’s stance or opinion about the topic?

- **Authorship (Sponsorship):** What are the credentials of the author? Who may have sponsored, or paid for, this information?

- **Credibility (Accuracy):** Is the information substantiated by facts? Is it confirmed by other sources?

- **Coverage (Scope):** Who is the intended audience? Does the information cover your topic in a meaningful, thorough way?

- **Purpose:** Is the information useful for your topic? Is it directly speaking to an issue you have identified?

- **Timeliness:** Is the information timely to the topic?

- **Reliability (Verifiability):** Is the information valid? Is it supported by other credible sources?

- **Impact:** How does the information compare with local knowledge, traditions and culture? What is the consequence of the information for future generations? What is its effect locally? Regionally?

### Resources

- **Mansfield Library**  
  http://www.lib.umt.edu

- **Writing Center**  
  http://umt.edu/writingcenter

- **Citation Guide**  
  http://libguides.lib.umt.edu/citation

Entries from: 

Adapted in part from:  

Remember that research is a process that requires continual refinement and increasingly sophisticated judgment.

Your contribution to this discourse is unique and marks you as a scholar.

Be proud of your voice!