Writing Your First Paper

This guide lists selected electronic and print resources and is intended to provide only a brief overview of the extensive research assistance that is available to students at the University of Toronto Libraries. The links were chosen based on their currency and usefulness to undergraduate students of humanities and social sciences.

Begin Your Research

**Ask a Reference Librarian**
Students are encouraged to book appointments for individual research consultations customized to their research needs. To book an appointment, please contact one of our reference librarians.

**Consult a Reference Source**
Reference sources (such as encyclopedias, dictionaries, handbooks, and compendiums contain entries which provide an overview of a topic). These types of sources are designed to provide background reading for your own development and refinement of a research topic.

Selected reference sources are organized by discipline on the main University of Toronto Libraries web site. However, the lists are not exhaustive and do not include all reference sources pertaining to specific topics within the disciplines. Search the library catalogue to find additional titles.

**Subject and Course Guides**
The guides are organized by discipline (e.g. English Literature, Political Science) or a specific course. They include descriptions and links to various resources (print and electronic).

Find Books

**The Library Catalogue**
The catalogue searches the print and electronic collections of all (44) libraries on the three campuses. Use it to locate books and ebooks, journal titles (but not individual journal articles), digital collections, audio-visual material, and government documents.

Find Journal Articles

**Journal Databases by Discipline**
Also known as “journal indexes,” they are research tools that contain specific types of research literature not found in the library catalogue: journal articles (including scholarly and popular), newspaper articles, book chapters, conference proceedings, and other types of publications.

Journal databases are organized by discipline on the main University of Toronto Libraries web site.

**Ulrichsweb**
Use this tool to determine whether a particular journal title is popular, scholarly, and/or peer-reviewed.

Find Primary Sources

**Demystifying Primary Sources for Historical Research**
A comprehensive guide with instructions on how to effectively find primary sources in the library catalogue and in online databases and incorporate primary sources into written assignments.

**Find Criticism of an Author’s Work**

*Guide to Finding Criticism Resources*
This guide contains step-by-step instructions on how to locate criticism of an author’s work in the library catalogue and journal indexes.

*Book Reviews: Humanities and Social Sciences*
Book reviews are an excellent source of assessing the quality of a published work. The guide lists all major book review databases with instructions on how to use them effectively.

**Evaluate Information & Information Sources**

*Critical Evaluation of Information Resources*
Lists five criteria that can be used to determine the usefulness, currency, and objectivity of an information resource (such as a book or an article).

*Critical Evaluation of Web Resources*
Outlines five criteria that can be used to evaluate the usefulness, currency, and objectivity of a web site.

**Cite Resources in My Paper**

*Citing Sources / Create Your Bibliography*
A comprehensive guide that contains information on all major styles of citation (including APA, MLA, and Chicago).

**Get Help with Writing**

*Victoria College Writing Centre*
The highly qualified instructors are able to assist you at any step of the writing process. Please book an appointment at least two weeks before your assignment is due.

*Writing at the University of Toronto*
Includes a directory of writing centres, a list of writing courses, as well as advice on all steps of the writing process, with links to further resources.

*Research and Essay Writing Guide*
Provides the titles and call numbers of manuals to citation styles (APA, MLA, and Chicago). Also contains research and style guides by discipline.

**Develop Research & Writing Skills**

*Develop Your Scholarly Voice: Research & Writing Seminars*
Each session in this suite of four interactive seminars integrates the learning of academic research and writing skills and is taught by a librarian in collaboration with a writing instructor.

The goal of each seminar is to help you develop your own voice as an emerging scholar by enabling you to identify, situate and substantiate your arguments in the context of the scholarly discussion taking
place in your discipline.

**Develop Effective Study Habits**

[Tutorial Services: Victoria College](#)
* Tutorial assistance and academic support services for students enrolled at the College.

[Academic Success Centre: University of Toronto](#)
* The Centre offers a variety of services (lectures, workshops, individual consultations) to assist students throughout their academic careers.

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