

Historical Research for MMAS Students

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The Research Process

Step 1: Clearly Define Your Topic or "Information Need"

- Start with a broad area of interest. Example: Star Trek.
- Narrow down your topic. Example: *Star Trek: TNG*
- Focus on something specific. Example: The use of expendable crew members in *Star Trek: TNG*.
- Write a "working" Thesis. Example: Expendable crewmembers in *Star Trek: TNG* have higher life expectancies than expendable crew members from the original *Star Trek* series.
- Note that this does not have to be your final thesis, just an idea to get the research process going. You can change and modify your thesis along the way.

Other Things to Consider:

- How much do you know about the topic?
- Is the topic manageable? Too much information - narrow your topic. Not enough information - expand your topic.
- Time needed - If your topic is too time-consuming: choose another topic or narrow your current topic.
- Availability of Information - are all the sources easily accessible (all on-hand), interlibrary loan time limits, etc.

Step 2 Collect / Find Information

- How much information will you need? That will depend on the reason you need the information. If you are writing a paper, what size does your paper need to be?
- What kind of information do you need?
- What level of information do you need? Scholarly information, popular information, both?

- How current does the information need to be?
- Learn the terminology and the keywords associated with your topic.
- Plan your search strategy. Learn the subject
- Identify Information Sources -what type of sources will you use for your topic?

Reference Tools: there are a wide variety of reference tools found in both print and online formats. Often, you'll find some ideally suited for your topic. Reference materials point you to other sources of information.

Books: try searching the [CARL catalog](#).

Periodical Literature: Journals, newspapers, and magazines are all valuable sources of information. Print indexes and electronic databases are used to find citations for scholarly articles and other types of periodical articles. Try using the CARL's [Databases Page](#).

Government and Military Information & Documents: these can be found in a wide variety of formats, including print and electronic. Our [Military Publications Page](#) is a great place to begin searching for DOD, Joint, Army, and other military publications. DTIC Public Stinet Database also contains a wealth of military documents, including SAMS Monographs, MMAS Theses, and student papers from schools like the Naval Postgraduate School, Air University, and the Army War College.

The Internet: You can find some great information on the Internet, but you must always carefully evaluate the web pages you find. Educational sites (.edu), US Government sites (.gov), and US Military sites (.mil) are often reliable sources for information.

Step 3: Evaluate Your Information

The following are the 5 evaluation criteria used in evaluating sources.

1. **Authority:** who is responsible for the work, and what are their credentials
2. **Reliability:** does the information seem accurate?
3. **Currency:** is the information up-to-date?
4. **Completeness:** is the information complete or is it just a summary of another work? Information Level? Intended Audience?
5. **Relevancy:** does the information source answer your questions?

Step 4: Use and/or Do Something With the Information

Write the paper, give the presentation. Organize your Information - using an outline is always a good idea.

Step 5: Use the Information Ethically and Legally -- Cite Your Sources

Citation: reference to an exact Information Source. Where the author got his/her info.

Use citations to:

- Back up your research with facts.
- Allow others to follow your research.
- Give credit to the original author(s).
- Avoid **Plagiarism**.

Plagiarism is: the unacknowledged inclusion, in work submitted for credit, of someone else's words, ideas, or data. The failure to identify any source, published or unpublished, copyrighted or uncopyrighted from which information, terms, phrases, or concepts have been taken, constitutes plagiarism.

Citations contain the following minimum information:

- Title of the information source / work.
- Author.
- Publishing Information.
- Web Address (if applicable).

Sample book citation for a bibliography in Turabian format:

Adams, Douglas. *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. New York: Pocket Books, 1979.

Sample journal article citation for a bibliography in Turabian format:

Aylwin-Foster, Nigel. "Changing the Army for Counterinsurgency Operations."
Military Review 85 (November-December, 2005): 2-15.

Style Guides

Style Guides - show you how to properly cite your Information Sources. There are 4 main style guides, CGSC uses Turabian.

APA (American Psychological Association). Publication manual of the American Psychological Association. Call Number: **808.02 P976**

MLA (Modern Language Association). MLA handbook for writers of research papers. Call Number: **808.6 G437m 1995** (1st floor reserves)
This is not the most current edition.

Chicago Manual of Style. The Chicago manual of style.
Call Number: **808.027 C532 2003**

Turabian. A manual for writers of term papers, theses, and dissertations.
Call Number: **808.02 T929m 1996** (1st floor multiple copy section)

Style Guides Available Online:

<http://library.concordia.ca/help/howto/citations.html>

http://www.lib.duke.edu/libguide/cite/works_cited.htm

CARL's listing of Style Guides:

<http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/cgsc/carl/gateway/reference.asp#Style>

Databases

JSTOR

[JSTOR](#) is on the [CARL's Databases Page](#). It is available at CAC and CGSC. From home you can access it by using your pin (the 14 digit number on the back of your CARL Library Card).

[JSTOR](#) is an archive of important scholarly journals. [JSTOR](#) offers researchers the ability to retrieve articles in PDF format. **JSTOR is not a current issues database.** There is a gap, typically from 1 to 5 years, between the most recently published journal issue and the content available in [JSTOR](#). If you need more current articles from a journal in JSTOR, try searching for the journal in our [online catalog](#) to find its print holdings or in our [E-Journal Portal](#) to see if any other databases carry the journal.

From [JSTOR's](#) main page, click on "Advanced Search".

Notice the "JSTOR Advanced Search" area, shown below. It allows you to limit your search to specific fields and types of content. One way to narrow your search is to just limit it to the title field or to the abstract. If you're just looking for articles, you can check that box. It also allows you to limit your search to a particular date range or even a specific journal title.

JSTOR HOME SEARCH BROWSE MyJSTOR

Advanced Search [View Tutorial](#) | [Search Help](#)

full-text

AND full-text

Add Field +

Include only content I can access

Include links to external content 

Search

NARROW BY:

<p>ITEM TYPE</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Articles</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Books</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Pamphlets</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Reviews</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Miscellaneous</p>	<p>DATE RANGE</p> <p>From <input type="text"/></p> <p>To <input type="text"/></p> <p><small>yyyy, yyyy/mm, yyyy/mm/dd</small></p>	<p>LANGUAGE</p> <p>All Languages <input type="text"/></p>
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PUBLICATION TITLE

ISBN

NARROW BY DISCIPLINE AND/OR PUBLICATION TITLE:

America History and Life -- Historical Abstracts

[America History and Life](#) and [Historical Abstracts](#) are on our [Databases Page](#). They are available at CAC and CGSC. From home you can access them by using your pin (the 12 digit number on the back of your CARL Library Card). **They do not contain full text articles**, but some provide links to articles located in JSTOR.

[America History and Life](#) Indexes and abstracts approximately 2100 scholarly journals covering the history and culture of the United States and Canada. [Historical Abstracts](#) is similar, but focuses primarily on the history of the rest of the world. Both use the same search system. Both Databases are available through [EBSCOHost](#). To learn how to search them, see Academic Search Complete (below).

Academic Search Complete

Academic Search Complete is available on our [Databases Page](#) through [Articles--EBSCOHost](#). It is available at CAC and CGSC. From home you can access it by using your pin (the 14 digit number on the back of your CARL Library Card). The search screen, pictured below, allows you to search by type of document, dates, etc. It also allows you to limit your search to full-text articles and Scholarly/Peer reviewed articles.

The screenshot shows the EBSCO Academic Search Complete search interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for "New Search", "Publications", "Subject Terms", "Cited References", and "More". The main search area features the EBSCO logo and a search box containing the text "ROLL TIDE!". Below the search box are three rows for adding search criteria, each with a dropdown menu for "Select a Field (optional)". To the right of the search box are "Search" and "Clear" buttons. Below the search box are links for "Basic Search", "Advanced Search", "Visual Search", and "Search History".

The "Search Options" section is divided into two main areas:

- Search Modes and Expanders:** This section includes radio buttons for "Search modes" (Boolean/Phrase, Find all my search terms, Find any of my search terms, SmartText Searching) and checkboxes for "Apply related words" and "Also search within the full text of the articles".
- Limit your results:** This section includes checkboxes for "Full Text" and "Scholarly (Peer Reviewed) Journals", a text input field for "Publication", and a dropdown menu for "Document Type" (All, Abstract, Article, Bibliography). It also includes checkboxes for "References Available", "Published Date from" (with month and year dropdowns), "Publication Type" (All, Periodical, Newspaper, Book), and "Language" (All, Afrikaans, Arabic, Azerbaijani).

Opening Records

Once you perform a successful search, you'll receive a list of records.

To view the citation and abstract for the record, click on the title of the article. To view the full text for the article, click on "PDF Full Text".

Some articles will be in PDF format, others will be in html. Some articles will only have abstracts available.

Search Tips

If you find an article that is highly relevant for your search, check its citation and abstract. Descriptors, keywords, authors, and other terms are hyperlinked in the record. The links show you all the records for those terms. For example, if you find warfare as a descriptor, by clicking on the hyperlink for warfare, you'll find every record in Academic Search Complete that uses warfare as a descriptor.

DTIC ONLINE ADVANCED SEARCH

DTIC's Advanced Search is available at the following URL:

http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/search/advanced_search.html

It is a public database, accessible from any computer with an internet connection. You can also find a link to it on CARL's [Databases Page](#).

USING DTIC's Advanced Search

DTIC's Advanced Search is fairly easy to use, though the display format for the search results is of poor quality and organization.

Search Tips

When searching, use the word "AND" to limit your results. Use the word "OR" to expand your results.

Truncation

Use the * to truncate words. The * will find any combination of letters after the root of the word.

NEED A DOCUMENT THAT IS NOT ONLINE?

If you require a document from DTIC that is not available in full text, ask our reference desk for assistance. If you require a book or journal article that is not online, try searching for the journal in our [online catalog](#) to find its print holdings or in our [E-Journal Portal](#) to see if any other databases carry the journal. You can also stop by the 1st floor reference desk and request the item through interlibrary loan.

Content for "The Research Process" is partially derived from the LSU Libraries Tutorial "The Research Process", available at <http://www.lib.lsu.edu/instruction/research/research-process00.html>