<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source Type:</th>
<th>Why Use:</th>
<th>Your Notes:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Reference: Subject Encyclopedias, in print and in databases, CQ reports | Start with Reference for:  
- Context and background information  
- Key issues  
- Key concepts and terminology  
- Narrowing or broadening a topic  
- Leads to more info | |
| Books and Book Chapters | Read books for:  
- History  
- Analysis  
- Discussion  
- Case studies/ personal stories  
- Essays or chapters  
- Scholarly or general audience | |
| Multimedia: Educational Video, Radio & TV | Use multimedia for:  
- Coverage of current social /news issues for a general audience  
- To learn more about a topic  
- Case studies & personal narratives | |
| Magazine and Newspaper Articles | Read magazine and news articles for:  
- Coverage of current local, national & international issues  
- Impartial reporting  
- Editorial and opinion  
- Research by journalists | |
| Websites | Search the web for:  
- Current organizations  
- Government Statistics  
- Up to the minute news | |
Selecting your resources: But is it relevant?

The hardest part of the “finding” process is not the mechanics of gathering a list of sources, but determining whether or not the article or book or other resource is relevant to your topic or assignment.

Whether you are in the library catalog or a library database, here are a few steps to take to determine whether or not an information source is relevant:

Look over the list of titles. Click on individual titles to open the citation record and learn more. Seems like a no-brainer; it’s the first step in the right direction.

Read the contents and notes for a book or abstract for an article. Is the content related to your topic? Is the content from a social sciences perspective? Is the book or article opinion pieces? History? Analysis? Understand the information you have found.

Check the publisher or journal title. Is it a Social Sciences journal? Is If you don’t know anything about the journal, click its title from inside the Citation. Where is it published? What type of publication is it? What subjects are listed? You can even Google the title to learn more.

Check the publication date. Is it too old? Too new? Does it fit chronologically with your topic/subject area? Note: just because something is old, doesn’t mean it’s bad. You need to take your subject area/discipline into consideration.

Check the Document Type in a database. Book reviews are generally not the type of article you are looking for.

Look at the Subject Terms. Are they all relevant? Do they help clarify, narrow, or understand your topic or assignment? If you click on one, does it take you to other relevant resources?

Evaluating Information: The CRAAP Test

Does that information belong in your paper or is it ... CRAAP?

Currency: The timeliness of the information
- When was the information published or posted?
- Has the information been revised or updated?
- Does your topic require current information, or will older sources work?
- If a website, are the links functional?

Relevance: The importance of the information for your needs
- Does the information relate to your topic or answer your question?
- Who is the intended audience?
- Is the information at an appropriate level (not too elementary or advanced)?
- Have you looked at a variety of sources before determining this is one you will use?
- Would you be comfortable citing this source in your research project?

Authority: The source of the information
- Who is the author/publisher/source/sponsor?
- What are the author's credentials or organizational affiliations?
- Is the author qualified to write on the topic?
- Is there contact information, such as a publisher or email address?
- If on the web, does the URL reveal anything about the author or source (for ex: .com .edu .gov .org .net)?

Accuracy: The reliability, truthfulness and accuracy of the content
- Where does the information come from?
- Is the information supported by evidence?
- Has the information been reviewed or refereed?
- Can you verify any of the information in another source?
- Does the language or tone seem unbiased and free of emotion?
- Are there spelling, grammar or typographical errors?

Purpose: The reason the information exists
- What is the purpose of the information? Is it to inform, teach, sell, entertain or persuade?
- Do the authors/sponsors make their intentions or purpose clear?
- Is the information fact, opinion or propaganda?
- Does the point of view appear objective and impartial?
- Are there political, ideological, cultural, religious, or personal biases?