

THE GENERAL RESEARCH PAPER BASED ON LIBRARY OR INTERNET DATA

A general research paper based on library or Internet data requires you to consult these data for two purposes: first, to refine the question that you will address in your paper (if a specific question hasn't already been assigned); and, second, to collect the information that you will use to support your paper's thesis. This information can be found both in print on paper and online electronically. Both kinds are increasingly interchangeable. The daily editions of the *New York Times*, for instance, originally emerge on paper but can also be read simultaneously online at the *New York Times* Web site. Then they are archived in libraries on microfiche or microfilm. *Sociological Abstracts*, a reference source published in annual printed volumes generally shelved in the reference section in libraries, is also available in a computerized version at library computer terminals. Many scholarly articles published in professional journals that are shelved in library periodical rooms or library stacks can also be retrieved electronically through online library catalogs and read on screen. Not only are the boundaries among these different media increasingly blurred but our Information Age presents us with mountains of data.

Students often feel overwhelmed by so much information. For example, the student who was assigned a research paper on the topic of single-parent families began by entering "single-parent family" in her college library computer database and found references to 599 articles and 50 books, while the Web search engine Google returned over 24,000 entries. To make matters worse, the research process, although in principle straightforward—determine what information you need, search for it, locate it, and record it—is rarely so simple. Instead, it is usually more a matter of lucky, imaginative guesses about keyword search terms and persistence in following clues to potentially good sources down branching paths. These branching paths will sometimes turn into frustrating dead ends after much wasted time, but they

also can change and enrich your understanding of the question addressed in your paper and what is involved in answering it. Finding your own path enables you to make your paper uniquely your own.

Several strategies and techniques can help you with this general research process: keeping track of your sources, determining where to start, evaluating the quality of potential sources, and searching efficiently for potential sources with keywords. We will present these techniques in rough sequential order, but the research process is inevitably messy. Once you are immersed in your topic, you must expect to have to circle back in order to search for and locate additional sources. You will evaluate their usefulness with criteria that will change and become more refined as you become more expert. You should resist any temptation to begin a general research project by starting to read through a mountain of hundreds, if not thousands, of available sources. Instead, begin by spending some time and thought on developing a good question and on preparing a record-keeping system.

BEFORE YOU START: CHOOSING A TOPIC

You often start a library research project not knowing much about your topic. How, then, do you begin to develop a good question?

First, you must select a general subject area—an area that is relevant to the concerns of your course and of interest to you. One way to find a topic is to skim your syllabus and course readings. Be sure to consider the entire syllabus, since a topic that will be discussed later in the course might be the basis for a good research question. Your instructor can help at this stage by letting you know if your topic is too broad or too far afield.

Next, even before going to the library, construct some provisional questions. For example, let's say you want to study the feminist movement in the United States. Ask yourself why this topic interests you. Your personal interest in a subject not only motivates you during the research and writing process; it can also guide you to ask a good question. Also ask yourself what specific aspect of the subject you want to investigate for this particular class assignment and what specifically you want to know about it. In the case of feminism, for example, you may want to focus your research on differences in wages ("Are women's wages lower than men's?"), on power differences ("Why do unequal power relations exist between men and women?"), or on ways people learn to fill the gender roles expected of them ("How are males and females socialized to enact sex-role stereotypes in their daily lives?").

Remember to maintain a sociological perspective on the subject. The examples given in the previous paragraph are sociologically relevant because they are concerned with differences between groups of people (men and women) and because they focus on patterned relationships in the social world. A review of Chapter 1 will help stimulate the sociological imagination you need to ask a good question.

Your next step is to arrange to keep track of your sources.

SETTING UP A RECORD-KEEPING SYSTEM

A record-keeping system will keep you from feeling as if you are drowning in a sea of information and will enable you later on to create a formal bibliography for your paper. (See "References and Bibliographies," pages 46–48.) We recommend an index card system: one index card for each source. Put bibliographical details on cards as you go along. Have some blank index cards always with you. Then, when you come across the details about a promising source, in the library or on the Web, you can record these details on an index card:

Author: all authors of the source, with surnames and first names in inverted order

Title: article, chapter, book, Web site

Facts of publication:

For journals: journal name in full, date of publication, volume number, inclusive pages

For books: city of publication, publisher's name, publication date

For a Web site: URL, sponsoring organization if named, date of publication, date of access

Of course, you can also open a special computer file for this information, but you may not always have your computer or a computer diskette with you when you come across a likely source. Later, you can simply arrange your cards in alphabetical order by author and write out the reference page (and bibliography, if required) for your paper. Recording this information is especially important for online sources that you cut and paste into your own files of notes. Recording this information will enable you to reconstruct it later when you may no longer know what the original source was or have access to it.

One alternative technique is to put the information on sheets of paper. If you use just one side of each sheet, then you can cut it up later and arrange the slips of paper in alphabetical order by author.

Another option is to enter the information on a computer. Some computer programs, like EndNote or Citation, exist solely for this purpose. Otherwise, even without one of these special programs, you can simply open a new file for your cards in your word-processing program.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF PRINT AND ELECTRONIC SOURCES

Once you feel ready to consult some sources, consider whether to begin with a trip to the library or an exploration of the Internet. The Internet may be easier and in some ways better to use, but it may also be worse! Make a

strategic calculation about the best approach by reviewing the following pluses and minuses in the Tables 6-1A and 6-1B.

Table 6-1A PRINT SOURCE

-
- + is subjected to quality control and professional review by librarians
 - + allows an overview of subdivisions of information
 - + makes available sources not online or on film
 - + makes available sources over any time period
 - + may be able to be taken out of the library
 - may not be immediately available in library
 - often requires expensive photocopying
 - may require a waiting period to acquire through recall or interlibrary loan
 - may be misshelved, misfiled, or marked up; page may be torn out
 - may be harder to read than a screen
-

Table 6-1B ELECTRONIC SOURCE

-
- + provides quick, easy searching
 - + offers easy duplication through cut-and-paste methods, printouts, or e-mail
 - + is presented in larger, more readable print on the screen than in some printed sources
 - + provides a great number of references and links
 - often has only recent information available
 - requires you to learn different (but simple) commands
 - often provides an overwhelming amount of data
 - often provides useless, misleading information via the Internet
-

DETERMINING YOUR FIRST SOURCE(S)

Quality, not quantity, is what counts in a good research paper. Finding *enough* sources is usually easy, given the problem of information overload. Finding the *right* sources can be a challenge. Should you start with a newspaper, a professional journal or magazine article, a general or specialized encyclopedia article, a government Web site, a book, or what? If you have an appropriate destination in mind, you are more likely to have a successful journey and to avoid detours and dead ends. Planning your initial search for the best sources involves several factors: how recent the information that you need is, and how much you already know about the topic.

Different sources contain information processed over time by authors with varying degrees of professional expertise. Here is an example illustrating how the student researching the topic of the single-parent family would look in

different sources for different kinds of information. The specific order in which she would consult these sources would depend on how much she already knows about her topic.

Newspaper: immediately newsworthy current events and local coverage; for example, City Council budget provisions for day care or stories about single parents on welfare

Magazine: recent current affairs and enduring popular topics; for example, a cover story on the state of marriage in the United States or a profile ranking Fortune 500 companies with the best day care programs

Journal: scholarly research results of specialists' studies conducted in the last few years; for example, case studies of economic and educational prospects of children growing up in single-parent homes

Book: in-depth coverage of a topic or collections of scholarly articles compiled over the last few years; for example, a history of family structure in the United States or a long-term study of single-parent families in Canada

Encyclopedia: the big picture of what is known about a topic; for example, ways in which parents influence the social development of children or the forms of family organization in different cultures

Internet: spans the range above, for example, information obtained from instantaneous chat room discussions for single parents to archived statistical government information from the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services

These sources represent layers of information processed over time. Consider, then, which layer you will probably need most, especially at the beginning of your search. For example, a student researching the legalization of same-sex marriage would need to rely on newspapers, magazines, and the Internet in order to read up on recent developments in the Hawaii and Vermont legislatures. A student investigating the disappearance of the gift economy in South Pacific societies would consult books and scholarly journal articles. Aiming in the right direction will make finding what you need more likely.

Consider, too, how much you know about your topic. If you don't know much, you may need to begin with an overview in a general or specialized encyclopedia, either online or in print. If you have already been studying the topic in class and are therefore able to understand the details, you may want to begin with a recent professional journal article.

A sociological principle can also guide you in your selection of sources: there are strong relationships between the quality of the information and the social setting of the source. Some journals and magazines, some book

publishers, and some authors are more reliable than others. Most students would intuitively know that tabloid magazines are not appropriate for college research papers (unless they were the topic being researched), but they are an extreme example. In general, we can identify a few guidelines for choosing reliable sources:

- ✦ Academic journals are more reliable than popular magazines. Some academic journals, such as *American Sociological Review*, may be difficult for undergraduates to read, especially the articles with complex statistics. But you can get the gist of such articles and consult the bibliographic references at the ends of the articles. Although popular magazines should not be excluded altogether, you should be critical of their contents.
- ✦ University presses are generally less likely to print poorly researched books than are commercial presses. For commercially published books, those written by academics are usually more reliable than those written by journalists. Again, the point is not to ignore books by journalists, but to approach them with a critical eye.
- ✦ Articles and books that carefully cite their sources of information are generally more reliable than those that don't. While some students find a heavily footnoted article or book daunting, carefully cited references provide the reader with the means to follow up on the author's assertions.

ANALYZING PRINT AND ELECTRONIC SOURCES

The print information that has been collected in a library is usually trustworthy. Professional librarians have judged it worth the cost of acquiring and storing. Internet information is different and more challenging. Some Internet information is excellent. But much of it is deceptive. At first glance it may look authoritative, but further scrutiny reveals it as incomplete, commercially or otherwise biased, out-of-date, or just wrong. Or, at first glance, Internet information may not itself look worthwhile, yet may include links to other valuable data. How can you determine the value of a potential research source? Where exactly should you look in a source for features that determine its quality? What specific features of a source reveal its worth and allow you to evaluate its usefulness?

Table 6-2 is designed to help you evaluate research sources. It lists the specific features that you should examine. "Print" refers to a source that was originally published on paper, even if you are reading an electronic copy. "Electronic" refers to a WWW page on the Internet. Consider each feature in this list and what it suggests about the value of the source you are examining. Not all these features are present in all sources, of course. Working through

Table 6-2 FEATURES OF RESEARCH SOURCES

Print	Electronic
1. Material Appearance ✦ cover (marketing approach, implied audience) ✦ endorsements (quotations)	1. Graphic Presentation ✦ color, fonts, images, frames, animation, sound, video (implied purpose)
2. Reputation ✦ reviews: cross-check <i>Book Review Digest</i> , <i>Book Review Index</i>	2. Recognition ✦ awards (check the award givers)
3. Author ✦ credentials: degrees, other publications (cross-check <i>Who's Who</i> , <i>Directory of American Scholars</i> , <i>American Men and Women of Science</i>) ✦ affiliation	3. Content Provider ✦ credentials ✦ e-mail address or link to home page
4. Editor ✦ credentials ✦ of a series	4. Web Designer
5. Title and Subtitle ✦ diction and tone (implied purpose and audience)	5. Headings and Subheadings ✦ coded title (check HTML source) ✦ topic list
6. Table of Contents ✦ classification of information (sequence and relationships)	6. Site Map of Subpages: Information Architecture ✦ navigational aids
7. Place of Publication	7. Site (URL server domain and extensions)
8. Publisher (commercial or nonprofit)	8. Sponsoring Organization (cross-check in <i>Encyclopedia of Associations</i>) ✦ link to home page (with mission statement) ✦ ads
9. Date ✦ subsequent and/or revised editions	9. Date and Update(s) ✦ recency, timeliness
10. Copyright	10. Restrictions on Use
11. Citation and References ✦ bibliography ✦ footnotes	11. Hyperlinks ✦ internally associated subpages ✦ external links
12. Index	12. Search Engine for Site ✦ FAQs
13. Catalog Information (Library of Congress or Dewey) ✦ classificatory call numbers ✦ Library of Congress subject headings	13. Metadata ✦ XML or other identifying information in source code ✦ percentile approximation to search engine query ✦ Boolean operator NEARBY LC call numbers

each feature will build in your mind an impression of the value of the source under examination.

ASSESSING INTERNET INFORMATION

The availability of so much online data, especially on the World Wide Web, is a new phenomenon. Unlike information channeled by professional librarians through library databases, much on the WWW is questionable. The information may be inaccurate and misleading because almost anybody can relatively easily "publish" information on the WWW without any scrutiny by legitimate scholars. The information provided by such useless and distracting dead ends may look trustworthy even if it isn't.

However, some Web sources are excellent. The demographic data on the U. S. Census Bureau's Web site <<http://www.census.gov>> provide a good example of a valuable source. This site, sponsored by the U. S. Department of Commerce, provides information about all kinds of population issues in various graphic and tabular formats: maps and statistics. The Census site also provides downloadable software for census and survey processing, and access to Census Bureau online roundtables, which are forums where the public can read and then post follow-up comments. So, too, the capacity of the search engine Google <<http://www.google.com>> to identify specialized U. S. Government Web sites can provide up-to-date government information that would be much harder to locate elsewhere, if at all.

In spite of a growing number of specialized search engines, finding excellent WWW sites usually requires sifting through lists that have not been assessed by a reliable evaluator, such as a librarian. For instance, a student writing about the issue of school uniforms as a deterrent to gang violence, and searching the Internet for potential data sources, was arbitrarily offered 10 initial sites by the search engine AltaVista. These 10 sites included links to the following range of sources:

- An editorial by Town Hall columnist William F. Buckley titled "School Uniforms?!"
- An article in the *San Mateo Times* about a voluntary uniform policy for students in the Redwood City school district in California
- An illustrated catalog of "naughty" uniforms, supposedly accessible only to those over 18 years old, from a company in England selling "erotic goodies" over the Internet
- A White House press release, "Manual on School Uniforms"
- A state-by-state tabular summary of school uniform and dress code policies from the national nonprofit organization Education Commission of the States
- Personal e-mail from a spokesperson for the Policy Support Program in San Francisco

CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING WEB PAGES

Clearly, filtering out useful from useless information on the Internet is essential. We recommend applying the following five criteria for assessing Web pages:

1. Credibility of Local Origin. Where does the information come from? Before you link to a WWW data source, check its electronic address (its uniform resource locator or URL). If the address includes the abbreviation *edu* or *gov* (which identifies its association with an educational institution or government agency), you may find more reliable information there than if the source's URL has the abbreviation *org* (organization) or *com* (commercial). Other less common abbreviations, such as *net*, also exist.

Examples

< http://www.census.gov/ >	(the U.S. Census Bureau)
< http://www.soc.qc.edu/ >	(the Sociology Department at Queens College, CUNY)
< http://www.aclu-sc.org/ >	(American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California)
< http://www.cybergrrl.com/ >	(the Cybergrrl Web station)

We are *not* suggesting that organizational or commercial Web sites are automatically inferior. The American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California, for instance, provides texts of legislation, starting with the Bill of Rights, and updates about the progress of pending legislative initiatives from the organization's liberal point of view. Similarly, the Cybergrrl Web station sponsors and houses SafetyNet, an excellent source of extensive data about domestic violence resources such as shelters. It also houses and sponsors WomenSpace, a shop-at-home pharmacy for women's products. However, you should be aware of any source's origin and judge its reliability.

2. Accountability. Is there an author or sponsor identified on the Web page, with an e-mail link? Is there a link on the page back to its "home"? Useful sources provide this information about their data.

3. Timeliness. When was the Web page last updated? Is the information still accurate? Online information quickly becomes obsolete.

4. Scope and Coverage. Does the information on the Web page seem well researched? Are useful links embedded in the page? How does the online information compare with what you have found on paper? Are the graphics worth the time it takes to download them? Be a thoughtful consumer of online information and beware of electronic junk mail.

5. Reputation. Is the Web page listed in any of the selective WWW search engines (for instance, FeMiNa for women's issues)? Check general search engines to see what other pages, if any, link to the Web page.

LOCATING INTERNET INFORMATION: SEARCHING ONLINE INFORMATION WITH BOOLEAN OPERATORS AND KEYWORDS

There are two general ways to begin looking for online Internet data. First, you can use the search capacity of your WWW browser, for instance, by activating the "Net Search" box on Netscape or by going directly to one of the search engines like AltaVista, Yahoo!, or Google. Second, you can go to a specialized WWW collection of linked sites like "WWW Resources for Sociologists" <<http://socsci.colorado.edu/SOC/links.html>>, maintained by Professor Susan Brumbaugh at the University of Colorado at Boulder. Once at this site, you can then follow links off it to such specialized online resources as sociology-related e-mail lists, newsgroups, and online publications; social science data archives; activist and feminist resources; criminology, demography, and family sociology resources; and miscellaneous resources including information about student travel, jobs, and funding and grants.

Finding some sources is usually easy. The problem is finding the best sources and not wasting your time while doing so. Searching for online information efficiently requires special techniques using Boolean operators, which are explained farther on. For more information, consult a college librarian. Your college library, like many others, may also provide handouts about or offer classes in these search techniques.

Boolean operators are logical relationships. Most undergraduates use only two Boolean operators when they search online sources: **OR** and **AND**. These Boolean operators allow you to use a computer to search for data sources tailored specifically to your own topic.

Consider what you would have to do instead if you relied on paper: checking through volumes of indexes and abstracts. Let's say that you are investigating the problems of mental illness among the homeless in Los Angeles. If you used paper,¹ you would consult a number of different sections of different volumes, pulling them down from different shelves, looking for separate information about mental illness, and then separate information about homelessness, and then separate information about Los Angeles.

The computer, however, can combine these concepts using Boolean operators, and search for them simultaneously. For example, the University of California has over 10,000 books on the subject of Los Angeles, 2,283 books on mental illness, and 596 books on homelessness. It has only one book in its collection about all these subjects combined: mental illness among the homeless in Los Angeles. If the computer is given the right commands, it can find information about this book in about three seconds: Farr, Rodger K. 1986. *A Study of Homelessness and Mental Illness in the Skid Row Area of Los Angeles*. Los Angeles, CA: Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health.

To make the computer do this online searching for you, you must first tell it exactly what terms to look for, such as words in titles, authors' names,

¹ We are *not* saying that paper is unimportant. Indeed, paper is often essential: some sources are indexed and abstracted only on paper, and electronic databases often do not go back very far in time.

Library of Congress subject headings, or keywords. In this example, the computer found this book by looking for words in titles (*mental illness, homelessness, Los Angeles*). Second, you can enlarge or shrink the scope of the search by using the Boolean operators **OR** or **AND**. In this example, the computer combined title words with **AND** (*mental illness AND homelessness AND Los Angeles*).

You are probably already familiar with using two categories to find library information: (1) authors' names and (2) the subjects they have written about. Online searching provides you with the opportunity to search with at least two more categories: (3) titles of sources, as in the example specified previously, and (4) keywords associated with sources.

Technically, a keyword is a word that may be located in the title of the source, or in the Library of Congress subject heading for the source, or even in the abstract of the source if that database provides abstracts. For example, an online search in a library catalog for articles, combining the keywords *mental illness, homelessness, and Los Angeles* with the Boolean operator **AND**, found this library source: a journal article by Paul Koegel, M. Audrey Burnam, and Rodger K. Farr, titled "Subsistence Adaptation Among Homeless Adults in the Inner City of Los Angeles" (Figure 6-1). Note that the keyword *mental illness* appears only in the article's abstract. A search by title words alone would not have found it. Although not all databases use keywords, keywords are particularly useful, and we recommend that you start an online search with them.

**Figure 6-1 SAMPLE OF ONLINE INFORMATION
FROM A LIBRARY CATALOG DATABASE**

Search request: F KW HOMELESSNESS AND KW MENTAL ILLNESS AND
KW LOS ANGELES

Search result: 1 citation in the Magazine & Journal Articles database

Display: 1 AB

1. Koegel, Paul; Burnam, M. Audrey; Farr, Rodger K.
Subsistence adaptation among homeless adults in the inner city of Los Angeles.
Journal of Social Issues v46, n4 (Winter, 1990):83 (25 pages).

Abstract:

Author Abstract: This article describes the subsistence-related activities of homeless adults in Los Angeles' downtown area, and examines whether homeless people with chronic disorders such as major mental illness and/or substance abuse differ from those with no chronic disorder in their subsistence adaptation. Findings indicate that homeless people use multiple resources over short periods of time. While minor differences between those with and without disorders were apparent, the general lack of differences between these two groups was most striking, suggesting the leveling quality of homelessness. Differences between individuals with various chronic disorders indicated that those with chronic substance abuse, and particularly those with both substance abuse and chronic mental illness, were most distinctive in their adaptation. COPYRIGHT Society for the Psychological Study of Reporting Service 1990.

When you use a WWW search engine, you need to tell it what to look for. For example, entering the keywords *mental illness*, *homelessness*, and *Los Angeles* into the search engine Google <www.google.com> returned a number of useful links, including ones to a fact sheet, "Why Are People Homeless?," produced by the National Coalition for the Homeless; to the HOPWA (Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS) site, which provides information about emergency food and shelter vouchers for homeless persons; and to a *Los Angeles Times* article about homeless women and children in downtown Los Angeles. Note in the following example (Figure 6-2) the particular value of the link to the annotated bibliography, a list of research sources prepared in May 1997 by the National Resource Center on Homelessness and Mental Illness for the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. Finding this reputable reference would be fortunate, indeed, for a student researcher.

Figure 6-2A SAMPLE OF SEARCH ENGINE HOME PAGE



Figure 6-2B SAMPLE OF SEARCH RESULTS

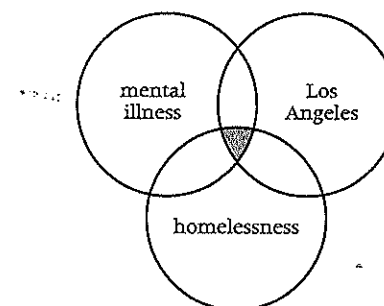
Annotated Bibliography - Research Methods and Measures
 ... Mental Illness in the Skid Row Area of Los Angeles....
 ...Resource Center on Homelessness and Mental Illness, Policy....
 www.ncor.org/biblio2.htm - 98k - Cached - Similar pages

Los Angeles Housing Needs Study
 ... Los Angeles housing needs study Study on the Housing Needs of...
 ...Persons Living with HIV/AIDS in Los Angeles, California Used by...
 www.hud.gov/cpd/hopwa/la.html - 17k - Cached - Similar pages

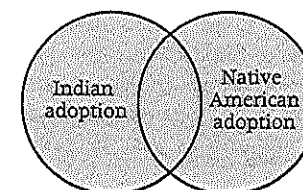
Mental Illness
 ...Shelters * Mental Illness * Poverty * About Homelessness
 ...Force on Homelessness and Severe Mental Illness, 1992....
 lantlant.tripod.com/mental.htm - 26k - Cached - Similar pages

Food Not Bombs chapters in Los Angeles
 ...Not Bombs - Los Angeles Serves @ 5pm, Pershing Square at 5th and ...
 ...layoffs, domestic violence, mental illness and addiction. ... The...
 members.xoom.com/pfafs/laanarchists/fnb.htm - 15k - Cached - Similar pages

The Boolean operator **AND** narrows a search, as shown in the following Venn diagram (*mental illness AND homelessness AND Los Angeles*).



In contrast, the Boolean operator **OR** enlarges a search. As shown in the following diagram, a search for online data sources about the controversy over tribal rights in Indian adoption should use the term *Indian adoption* with the Boolean operator **OR** plus the term *Native American adoption* (that is, *Indian adoption OR Native American adoption*).



Boolean operators can also be combined. For instance, the student looking specifically for online information about Indian adoption in California could search with this command:

find keyword *Indian adoption OR Native American adoption AND California*

USING A TRUNCATION SYMBOL

A useful technique when using Boolean operators is to introduce a *truncation symbol*. Although different databases use different truncation symbols, the most common of these symbols are # and *. A truncation symbol stands for letters in a word, such that *adopt#* would stand for *adoption*, *adoptive*, *adopting*, as well as *adopt*. So, too, *legal** could stand for *legality* or *legalization*. The computer searches for any word beginning with the letters up to the truncation symbol. To be sure of finding all the potential good, relevant data sources, the student searching for online information about Indian adoption should use a truncation symbol; in the case of the University of California's library catalog it is a #:

find keyword *Indian adopt# OR Native American adopt#*

USING THE LIBRARY TO REVIEW THE SOCIOLOGICAL LITERATURE

Begin your work in the library by getting an overview of the sociological research that has already been conducted on your question. (The following section on locating references will help you do this.) This overview of research published in books and journal articles is called "a review of the literature." ("Literature" in this sense, of course, has nothing to do with fiction and poetry.) "Reviewing the literature" in sociology involves discovering whether scholarly research has been published on the question you tentatively have in mind, how the question was formulated, and what answers have been suggested.

Reviewing the literature will help you in two important and interrelated ways. First, a review of the literature helps you to refine your question. How has the question been framed before? Has more than one plausible answer been suggested as a result of empirical or theoretical research? As you fine-tune your question, remember that you must be able to find sufficient evidence to support the answer you will propose, and that it must be specific enough to be researchable within the time frame of your assignment. Second, reviewing the literature helps you to identify those books and journal articles that contain reports of research into the question you will address in your paper. The quality of your paper will depend on how thoroughly you locate such research; it is the "data" you will use to support your thesis. Once you locate relevant books and articles, you will take in-depth notes on them.

USING THE LIBRARY TO LOCATE SPECIALIZED SOCIOLOGICAL REFERENCES

The key to the library is the reference section, where you can get help from two sources: reference librarians and reference texts. The reference librarians are there to answer your questions and help you find the most appropriate books, articles, journals, and abstracts for your project. You can also consult a variety of reference texts on your own, especially two reference texts that are librarians' "trade secrets":

Balay, Robert et al. 1996. *Guide to Reference Books*. 11th ed. Chicago, IL: American Library Association.

Webb, William H. et al. 1986 *Sources of Information in the Social Sciences: A Guide to the Literature*. 3d ed. Chicago, IL: American Library Association.

If your course textbooks include lists of "Recommended Readings," often located at the ends of chapters, you can start with those references, choosing suggested books and articles that seem most appropriate. Start with the most recently published sources because they include references to earlier works.

Be aware that, for a college research paper, unlike most papers for high school, you will be expected to consult articles in specialized professional

journals. (An annotated list of journals and other resources used by sociologists is given at the end of this chapter.)

In addition to any references you find in your textbooks, you should begin your research with the following six library resources on which sociology students rely:

- + Specialized dictionaries and encyclopedias
- + Library catalog
- + *Sociological Abstracts* (electronic version)
- + *Social Science Index*
- + *Social Science Citation Index*
- + Other computerized bibliographic sources

SPECIALIZED DICTIONARIES AND ENCYCLOPEDIAS

These references explain key terms and concepts, and provide background information on the life and times of key historical figures:

Jary, David. 1991. *The Harper Collins Dictionary of Sociology*. New York: Harper Perennial.

Johnson, Allan G. 2000. *The Blackwell Dictionary of Sociology: A User's Guide to Sociological Language*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.

Marshall, Gordon, ed. 1994. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Sociology*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Saha, Lawrence J., ed. 1997. *International Encyclopedia of the Sociology of Education*. New York: Pergamon.

The advantage of beginning with specialized dictionaries or encyclopedias is that they can give you a quick overview of a subject. However, they are often not the most up-to-date sources.

LIBRARY CATALOG

Use the catalog to find suitable books in your library. Library books may sometimes still be identified on index cards in drawers. Or books may be listed on celluloid microfiches that you must read in special machines to magnify this information. Most likely, however, your library catalogs its books with a computerized system that displays this information on a screen; and with some computerized online systems you can print out your own copy of appropriate information. In all three cases, only the equipment changes; the books are organized in the same way—according to author's name, title, and subject.

Finding information by looking in the catalog under author and title is relatively straightforward. But if you look under a subject for books about your topic and don't find any information, it may be because the subject you are looking under is not an official subject category. For example, if your paper is on the implications of regulating handguns, and if you look in the catalog under the subject "Handguns" or "Handgun Control," you will not find

anything. "Handguns" and "Handgun Control" are not official topics. In this case, you must consult a special reference book to find official topics, called "subject headings." This special reference book, a large, red multivolume set called *The Library of Congress Subject Headings*, is usually placed near the catalog. For example, if you look up "Handguns" in *The Library of Congress Subject Headings*, you will find this instruction: "See Pistols." If you look up "Handgun Control" in *The Library of Congress Subject Headings*, you will find "See Gun Control." You will also be told that "Works on legal aspects of gun control are entered under 'Firearms—Law and legislation'." Finding books by subject in the catalog often requires this kind of detective work in order to find the right subject heading (for example, "Firearms—Law and legislation"). As another example, if you want to find books on fraternities, *The Library of Congress Subject Headings* tells you to look in the catalog under the official topic "Greek letter societies."

SOCIOLOGICAL ABSTRACTS

Sociological Abstracts, published both as a set of annual volumes and as a computer database, includes references to sociological publications since 1974. Ask your librarian if your library has the computer version. If it does, ask for help in learning how to use it. The computer version is much easier and quicker to use because you don't have to do a separate search for each year of publications.

Sociological Abstracts gives more than bibliographic information. It also provides abstracts of articles published in major sociological journals. (An abstract is a summary of an article.) Learning to use *Sociological Abstracts* will save you much time, since these summaries will allow you to decide whether the sources themselves are relevant to your topic. In this way you can weed out some without having to locate and read them.

Printed Version

To use the printed version of *Sociological Abstracts*, follow these two steps:

Step One Locate the index volume for a recent year. Here you will find subject headings. Under the headings will be references to abstracts. Each abstract has its own unique number. For example, under the subject heading of "Firearms" you will find the information shown in Figure 6-3. Jot down the number at the end of any references to abstracts that look potentially useful;

Figure 6-3 INDEX ENTRY FROM *SOCIOLOGICAL ABSTRACTS*

Firearms
 firearm availability homicide rate relationship, Detroit, Michigan; police statistics 1851-1986: 91Y2087
 gun ownership, white southerners, cultural explanations; 1984-1989 General Social Surveys: 91Y0624

for example, 91Y0624. These numbers are not page numbers. They are abstract numbers. Each abstract, in another volume, has its own number.

Step Two Now look up the abstract by its number in a separate volume, which is usually shelved next to the index volume. This abstract will give a summary of the article and bibliographic information telling you where the complete article can be found. Papers delivered at conferences are also summarized in the abstracts. When using the abstracts, make sure you are aware of the sources of articles, since it may be very difficult for you to find papers that have been delivered at conferences but have not been published. For example, if your topic is on gun ownership, then you would look up the number 91Y0624 and find the abstract shown in Figure 6-4. The bibliographic information indicates that this article was published in the journal *Social Science Quarterly*, which is found in most libraries.

If you already have an author's name and want an abstract of the article, you can start looking in the index volume under authors' names, not subject headings (see Figure 6-5). Locating 91Y0624 is the same as in step two above.

It is helpful to go through the printed versions of these indexes by annual volume in order to become familiar with new published sources for your research. At the end of each year, a cumulative index is compiled that you can refer to and save time by not having to search through each individual volume.

Figure 6-4 TEXT ENTRY FROM *SOCIOLOGICAL ABSTRACTS*

91 = 1991
 Y0624 = abstract number

91Y0624
 Ellison, Christopher G. (Dept Sociology Duke U, Durham NC, 27706),
 Southern Culture and Firearms Ownership, *UM Social Science Quarterly*, 1991, 72, 2, June, 267-283.

¶ Four potential cultural explanations for the relatively high levels of gun ownership among white southerners are examined: the subculture of violence, racial prejudice, ideological conservatism, & the sporting gun subculture. Analysis of data from the 1984-1989 General Social Surveys (base N = 3,332) reveals modest links between southern subcultures of racism & conservatism & firearm ownership, negligible support for the subculture of violence thesis, & no empirical support for the southern sporting gun subculture hypothesis. It is suggested that structural factors may mediate the links between southern cultural orientations & gun-owning behavior; however, better methodological techniques are needed before these mediating factors can be understood. 2 Tables, 32 References. Adapted from the source document. (Copyright 1991, Sociological Abstracts, Inc., all rights reserved.)

Figure 6-5 INDEX ENTRY FROM *SOCIOLOGICAL ABSTRACTS*

Ellison, Christopher G., 91Y0624,
 91Y2307

Computerized Version

To use the computerized version of *Sociological Abstracts*, check first with your instructor or librarian. We cannot tell you exactly what syntax you will need to use because there are different software "shells" for accessing the computerized version. However, your instructor or librarian can help you get started.

If you looked up "Firearms" in the computerized version, you would find that there are 193 items (at the time of this writing), more or less with the most recent items given first. An example is shown in Figure 6-6. Note that some software shells will print only some fields unless you ask for a complete display; others will allow you to select which fields you want displayed. Note, too, that some of the fields have little meaning to you, such as "NUMBER" or "STANDARD NO." If you are able to download this information onto a floppy disk or print it directly, we recommend doing so; otherwise make a note of

Figure 6-6 TEXT ENTRY FROM COMPUTERIZED VERSION OF SOCIOLOGICAL ABSTRACTS

NUMBER: 96W23573
 AUTHOR(S): Weisman, Carol S.
 AFFILIATION: c/o Women's Health Issues-Elsevier Science Inc, 655 Ave Americas New York NY 10010
 TITLE: Armed by Fear: Self-Defense Handguns and Women's Health
 PUB YEAR: 1995
 JOURNAL: Women's Health Issues, 1995, 5, 1, spring, 3-7.
 STANDARD NO: CODEN: WHISEH ISSN: 1049-3867
 COUNTRY: United States
 LANGUAGE: English
 PUB TYPE: Abstract of journal article (aja)
 ANNOUNCEMENT: Social Planning, Policy & Development Abstracts (SOPODA), 018, 01, 1996
 ABSTRACT: The gun industry has exploited women's fear of crime & created a huge female market for self-defense handguns. The industry touts personal firearm protection as the answer to crimes committed by violent strangers lurking everywhere. Exploration of the real risks to women from injury & death related to firearms shows that white females, the target market for guns, are the least likely victims of violence by strangers; the threat for this group is domestic violence. Statistical studies have shown that a gun in the home is a significant risk factor in homicide. Gun ownership increases risks from gun injuries, from one's own gun either accidentally or from suicide. If domestic violence is a problem, husbands, intimate partners, & other relatives also have access to the gun. Since a number of factors determine how successfully a gun can be in thwarting a criminal intent, not just gun ownership, owning a gun may not actually increase personal safety. 25 References. M. Pflum (Copyright 1996, Sociological Abstracts, Inc., all rights reserved.)
 IDENTIFIERS: women's personal safety; gun ownership; statistical studies;
 SUBJECT HDGS: *Firearms (D303600). *Family Violence (D289200). *Victimization (D902700). Fear of Crime (D294000). Violence (D905400). Protection (D672200). Females (D296700).

the author(s), title, year of publication, and journal, and paraphrase the abstract in your own words.

SOCIAL SCIENCE INDEX

This valuable source of bibliographic information comes in both printed annual editions and a computer database. The *Social Science Index* identifies where and when journal articles on social science topics have been published. The back section of each volume identifies where you can find book reviews. However, the *Social Science Index* does not print these articles or give you any summary information about them. Instead, it tells you which issues of the journal to look in for the article itself. The information is abbreviated, and the abbreviations are explained at the beginning of each volume. You will also find titles of indexed journals at the beginning of each volume.

Whether you are using the printed or the computerized version, *Social Science Index* lists information about articles in two ways—by author's name and by subject headings followed by a list of relevant articles. You can therefore search for information in two ways.

If you know the author's name, look it up in the index by year to see what he or she has published. If you know the year of the publication, simply get the index for that year and look up the author's name. The listings are arranged in alphabetical order. For example, if you are looking for a source citation of an article written by Joseph F. Sheley in 1995, pull out the 1995 index and look under Sheley, Joseph F. As you can see in Figure 6-7, the information is abbreviated. By checking the abbreviations at the beginning of the volume, you will be able to establish that Joseph F. Sheley and colleagues published an article titled "Gang Organization, Gang Criminal Activity, and Individual Gang Members' Criminal Activity," on pages 53-68 in volume 76 of the journal *Social Science Quarterly* in March 1995.

You can also look under subject headings for issues and titles of articles connected with your topic. For example, if you look up "Gangs" in the index, you will find another reference to this same article, "Gang Organization, Gang Criminal Activity, and Individual Gang Members' Criminal Behavior," as shown in Figure 6-8.

Figure 6-7 AUTHOR'S NAME, SOCIAL SCIENCE INDEX

Sheley, Joseph F., and others
 Gang organization, gang criminal activity, and individual gang members' criminal behavior. *bibl Soc Sci Q* v76 p53-68 Mr '95

Figure 6-8 SUBJECT ENTRY, SOCIAL SCIENCE INDEX

Gangs
 Gang organization, gang criminal activity, and individual gang members' criminal behavior J. F. Sheley and others. *bibl Soc Sci Q* v76 p53-68 Mr '95

SOCIAL SCIENCE CITATION INDEX

Like *Sociological Abstracts* and *Social Science Index*, this valuable source of bibliographic information comes in both printed annual editions and a computer database. But the *Social Science Citation Index* gives other information and is a unique and invaluable reference source for established scholars and undergraduates alike.

Social Science Citation Index has three special features. First, it identifies the references that authors cite in their articles (hence, the word "citation" in its title). This feature allows scholars to trace the interconnected network of a research tradition and see which scholars' work influenced which other scholars. Second, this work enables scholars to find information by academic or corporate affiliation. These two features are used primarily by graduate students, researchers, and professors. However, the third unique feature of this reference source is particularly useful for undergraduates. Unlike the other reference works listed so far in this chapter, *Social Science Citation Index* does not list information about articles according to subject headings. Rather, *Social Science Citation Index* lists this information according to the keywords in these articles' titles.

Do not expect to find the *Social Science Citation Index* easy to decipher and read, because so much information, often abbreviated, is compressed into this source, and in the published version the print is quite small. However, the following examples will help you understand its organization. And with some brief experience using it, you will find the *Social Science Citation Index* to be an indispensable reference tool.

Each annual set of the published version of *Social Science Citation Index* includes these four volumes:

- + *Subject Index*
- + *Source Index*
- + *Citation Index*
- + *Corporate Index*

However, undergraduates usually need to use only the first two volumes. To use *Social Science Citation Index*, follow these corresponding two steps:

Step One Look in a recent year's *Subject Index* to find articles that have words of interest in their titles. For example, if you are investigating the relationship between firearms and violence, you could look under "Firearms" or "Violence" to see if any articles were published in that year with those words in their titles. See Figure 6-9 for an example. From this list you could tell that such an article was published in 1999. It was published by A. Kellermann and S. Heron.

Step Two Look in the 1999 *Source Index* under the first author's name (A. Kellermann) to find the complete bibliographic information (Figure 6-10). Kellermann and Heron's article titled "Firearms and Family Violence," appeared in *Emergency Medicine*, volume 17, number 3, on page 699. The article

Figure 6-9 **SUBJECT INDEX ENTRY, SOCIAL SCIENCE CITATION INDEX**

FIREARMS	
ACCESS	---- J ADV NURS
ATTEMPTS	---- DEMOORE GM
CARRY	---- MAY DC
CONSUMER	---- SORENSON SB
CONTROL	---- CARTER GL
CRIMINAL	---- NEWBOLD G
DEPRESSED	---- J ADV NURS
DIFFER	---- NELSON DE
EVER	----
EXPOSURE	---- KARGER B
FAMILY	---- KELLERMAA
FARMERS	---- J ADV NURS
HEIGHTS	---- DEMOORE GM
HOUSEHOLD	---- CUMMINGS P
INDIVIDUALS	---- NELSON DE
INSTRUMENTS	---- KARGER B
LEAPING	---- DEMOORE GM
NEW-ZEALAN.	---- NEWBOLD G
PRODUCT	---- SORENSON SB
REGULATING	----
RELATIONSH.	---- MILLER M
RESPONSES	---- NELSON DE
RESTRICTED	---- J ADV NURS
SCHOOL	---- MAY DC
SHARP	---- KARGER B
STUDENTS	---- MAY DC
SUICIDE	---- DEMOORE GM
	---- MILLER M
	---- ROSENBER.ML
SUICIDES	---- KARGER B
THESIS	----
USE	---- NELSON DE
	---- NEWBOLD G
VIOLENCE	---- KELLERMAA
WHETHER	---- NELSON DE

included 73 citations, which are identified, as is the authors' institutional affiliation (Emory University, Center for Injury Control, Department of Emergency Medicine, School of Medicine).

OTHER COMPUTERIZED BIBLIOGRAPHIC SOURCES

In addition to using the computerized versions of library card catalogs, *Sociological Abstracts*, *Social Science Index*, and *Social Science Citation Index*, you may be able to search for Internet data if you have access, at school or at home, to a computer, a modem, and e-mail. (See pages 84-91 for a discussion of how to search for and judge online information.)

Finally, your library may have other computerized bibliographies that will suggest books and articles to read. While the library catalog lists books, these other sources list journal articles as well. Like the computerized version of *Sociological Abstracts*, there are computerized resources in other academic disciplines, such as PSYCHINFO (the computerized version of *Psychological Abstracts*), ECONLIT (the computerized version of *Economic Abstracts*), and ERIC (the Educational Resources Information Center, a national information system sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education that collects educational documents and makes them available to teachers, administrators, students,

Figure 6-10 SOURCE INDEX ENTRY, SOCIAL SCIENCE CITATION INDEX

KELLERMANN A			
■ HERON S — FIREARMS AND FAMILY VIOLENCE			
EMERG MED C 17(3):699	99	73R	240PV
EMORY UNIV, CTR INJURY CONTROL, DEPT EMERGENCY MED, SCH MED,			
1518 CLIFTON RD, ATLANTA GA 30322, USA			
*AM AC PED CTR PRE	54	STOP STEPS PREV HAND	
*AMA	58	PHYS FIR SAF GUID	
*BUR JUST STAT	97	US DEP JUST CRIM VIC	
*BUR JUST STAT US	94	VIOL INT	1
*COUNC SCI AFF	92	JAMA-J AM MED ASSOC	267 3184
*HELP NETW	96	FIR DOM VIOL EXPL LI	
*OFF DIS PREV HLTH	94	CLIN HDB PREV SERV P	
*US DEP HHS	90	HLTH PEOP 2000 NAT	236
*US DEP JUST	96	FBI UN CRIM REP US 1	
ANNIST JL	95	JAMA-J AM MED ASSOC	273 1749
BAILEY JE	97	ARCH INTERN MED	157 777
BLACK DA	96	J LEGAL STUD	27 209
BLOCK CR	95	CRIME DELINQUENCY	4 496
BLUMENSTEIN A	78	DETERRENCE INCAPACIT	
BONDERMAN J	95	WOMEN HEALTH ISS	5 3
BROOKOFF D	97	JAMA-J AM MED ASSOC	277 1389
BROWNE A	87	BATTERED WOMEN KILL	
CAMPBELL JC	93	QUESTIONS ANSWERS LE	1 27
COOK PJ	79	POLICY STUDIES REV A	3 743
	91	CRIME JUSTICE ANN RE	14 1
	96	GUNS AM RESULTS COMP	
CRAVEN D	96	FEMALE VICTIMS VIOL	
CROWELL NA	92	UNDERSTANDING VIOL	
CUMMINGS P	97	AM J PUBLIC HEALTH	87 974
	98	JAMA-J AM MED ASSOC	280 471
DUTTON MA	98	J AM MED WOMEN ASSOC	51 92
GLICK S	97	STUDY FIREARMS IND M	
	97	WHO DIES LOOK FIREAR	
GREENFIELD L	98	VIOLENCE INTIMATES A	
HEMENWAY D	97	J CRIM LAW CRIM	87 1430
	98	NEW ENGL J MED	339 2029
JOURILES EN	98	J FAM PSYCHOL	12 178
KEHRBERG MW	81	AM J EPIDEMIOL	114 873
KELLERMANN AL	95	NEW ENGL J MED	314 1557
	91	ANNU REV PUBL HEALTH	12 17
	92	J TRAUMA	33 1
	92	NEW ENGL J MED	327 467
	93		329 1084
	95	JAMA-J AM MED ASSOC	273 1759
	96	NEW ENGL J MED	335 1438
	97	AM J PUBLIC HEALTH	87 910
	98	J TRAUMA	45 283
KLECK G	88	SOC PROBL	35 1
	91	POINT BLANK	
	95	J CRIM LAW CRIM	86 150
	98	JAMA-J AM MED ASSOC	280 473
LEE RK	91	AM J EPIDEMIOL	134 511
	93	AM J PREV MED	16
LOTT JR	97	J LEGAL STUD	24 1
LUDWIG J	96	DO PERMISSIVE CONCEA	
MAY JP	94	CHICAGO MED	97 13
MCADREE RE	95	JAMA-J AM MED ASSOC	273 1790
MCDOWALL D	91	CRIMINOLOGY	29 541
	94	AM J PUBLIC HEALTH	84 1982
	95	J CRIM LAW CRIM	86 183
MCLEER SV	89	AM J PUBLIC HEALTH	79 65
QUIGLEY P	89	ARMED FEMALE	
RAND MR	94	GUNS CRIME HANDGUN V	
	97	VIOLENCE RELATED INJ	
REISS AJ	93	UNDERSTANDING PREVEN	
SALTZMAN LE	92	JAMA-J AM MED ASSOC	267 3043
SCHLESSELMAN JJ	82	CASE CONTROL STUDIES	
SLOAN JH	88	NEW ENGL J MED	319 1256
STRAUS MA	90	PHYSICAL VIOLENCE AM	
THOMPSON B	98	WASHINGTON POST 0329	
VERNICK JS	97	JAMA-J AM MED ASSOC	277 1391
VLAHOV D	91	EPIDEMIOLOGY	2 444
WEBSTER DW	97	AM J PUBLIC HEALTH	87 918
WEIL D	92	JAMA-J AM MED ASSOC	267 333
WINTERMUTE G	95	ADVERTISING FIREARMS	
WINTERMUTE GJ	87	JAMA-J AM MED ASSOC	257 3107
WRIGHT JD	83	GUN WEAPONS CRIME VI	
WYNDER EL	50	JAMA-J AM MED ASSOC	143 329

and other researchers). You can also consult computerized bibliographies on a variety of particular topics, such as the Chicano Database, PAIS (the Public Affairs Information Service), and Population Index on the Web. Ask your librarian which of these are available at your college or university and for help on how to use them. They can be very useful for finding books and articles on the topic of your paper.

RECORDING INFORMATION: MANAGING YOUR PHOTOCOPIES AND PRINTOUTS

Many students find that once they begin the research process they quickly accumulate piles of photocopies and printouts. Because such copying is expensive, you will want to be selective and not reproduce everything on your topic. While you look the material over to check its usefulness, you can also use the following strategy for sorting out important information from material that is irrelevant. It will not take much more time, and will help you manage the information and clarify your plans. (Don't forget to record the bibliographical details about your photocopies or printed-out sources.)

You are probably already in the habit of underlining or highlighting important statements when you read your textbooks. You can do the same thing with copied source material. You will find this process more helpful if you have at hand pens in several different colors, one for each of various subheadings. As you scan the copy, you can key a particular color to a particular subheading. For example, the student researching single-parent families used one color for statistical data, another for information about legal resources and regulations, and still another for information about children in such families. The result may be a page that resembles a rainbow, but you will have separated the subheadings visually. Write your color-coding key on something you can locate readily. (One suggestion is to write this key on the back of the bibliography card you've made for this photocopied source.)

As you read and highlight, take advantage of having your own copy to write notes in the margins. Jot down your responses to this reading. These annotations may be as brief as a subheading, or they might contain a brief summary of your opinion or a reminder to yourself for later. Unlike many of the notes that you take in a textual analysis (see pages 62–63), which attempt to outline and restate the text's main argument, the notes that you take in a research project are carefully selected to become evidence in your own paper. As C. Wright Mills explains in "On Intellectual Craftsmanship," his appendix to *The Sociological Imagination* ([1959] 2000):

rather than read entire books, you will very often read parts of many books from the point of view of some particular theme or topic in which you are interested. . . . Therefore, you will take notes which do not fairly represent the books you read. You are *using* this particular idea, this particular fact, for the realization of your own projects. (P. 199)

Of course, Mills is not saying that your notes can be inaccurate or that they can misrepresent the original author. He is suggesting that the note-taking purpose is different. For more information, review "Taking Notes," in Chapter 5, pages 62–63.

In addition to your notes, be sure to write the author's name or the title of the article somewhere on the page you have highlighted and annotated. You will already have collected the full set of bibliographic information in one location, but this shorthand on the photocopy will enable you to match up the two. Doing this will mean that you will not have to keep the entire article if you are only using a page from it.

If you decide to highlight and annotate a great deal of photocopied material, you will eventually end up with many loose pieces of paper that seem to have no organization. Two techniques can solve this problem. They may seem to involve a lot of reshuffling and arranging and labeling, but they are part of a logical, as well as a logistical, process. It is closely related to the other techniques of outlining described on pages 30–31. Shuffling your pages will automatically help you to think about your topic and its various problematic aspects, one or more of which will be possible directions for you to develop. Indeed, as Mills explains, this "re-arranging" process is "one way to invite [the sociological] imagination. . . . You simply dump out heretofore disconnected folders, mixing up their contents, and then resort them" (p. 212).

1. If you have a number of photocopies and printouts that contain information about one subheading (for instance, the effects of recent welfare legislation on single mothers), you can group these copies together alphabetically by author or by the first letter of the title and put them into a folder labeled with that subheading.
2. If you have a number of photocopies or printouts that contain information about two or more subheadings, you can at least alphabetize the pages by author or the first letter of the title. On the label of the folder, you should write the subheadings contained inside. You will know automatically that a folder with two or more subheadings is arranged alphabetically.

Again, we want to emphasize the value of Mills's advice that writers play around with their files, rearranging them and developing new file headings. This leads to new insights about your question. For example, your files on divorce might originally have been labeled "strain of modern life," "financial stress," "disagreement over raising children," and "adultery." But when you read through the files, you may find that the material clumps together in categories like "class differences," "attitudes toward women's roles," "legal changes," and "demographic change." At this point in the research process, not only will you better understand the significance of your collected data, but you will also be better prepared to organize your paper. For more information on various techniques of outlining your first draft, see pages 30–31 in Chapter 2.

JOURNALS OFTEN USED BY SOCIOLOGISTS

Scholars rely on journal articles, as well as books, to keep up with new research and professional opinion. But journals aren't a trade secret. Undergraduates, as apprentice scholars, can also use journal articles. Most college libraries have a quiet, convenient place where current issues of major journals are kept before being bound and shelved, like other books, in the main sections of the library. We recommend that you find this reading area, often called "Current Periodicals," and browse through some of the journals in the following list. This experience will give you a dramatic sense of the discipline's ongoing research tradition, which is only hinted at in textbooks. It may also trigger some ideas about possible topics for your future papers. Although the articles in these journals are intended primarily for a trained scholarly audience, rather than the general public, and sometimes employ sophisticated statistical techniques, you will find many articles easily accessible to undergraduates.

American Journal of Sociology Published bimonthly by the University of Chicago Press, this influential journal includes theoretical and research articles, book reviews, and commentaries on articles published previously.

American Sociological Review Published bimonthly by the American Sociological Association (ASA), this review covers diverse areas of sociology, often with a statistical and empirical orientation. A cumulative index appears every three years.

Annual Review of Sociology These review articles, which summarize some particular field of sociology, reflect a broad perspective and can be found under such categories as differentiation and stratification, institutions, political and economic sociology, social processes, policy, historical sociology, urban sociology, and political sociology.

British Journal of Sociology Published quarterly, this journal discusses historical, theoretical, and methodological issues. An annual index includes book reviews.

Contemporary Sociology Published bimonthly by the ASA, its special feature is to review books, journals, articles, and films that cover a wide range of areas, such as historical and comparative sociology, social psychology, gender, education, and stratification. The review essays are especially useful for learning about new publications and sociologists' evaluations of them.

Criminology Published quarterly, this interdisciplinary journal emphasizes research in the social and behavioral sciences about crime and deviant behavior, and presents articles on the theoretical and historical components of crime, law, and criminal justice.

Demography This interdisciplinary journal, published quarterly by the Population Association of America, includes research studies on developing countries as well as developed countries.

Gender and Society Published quarterly, this interdisciplinary journal is sponsored by Sociologists for Women in Society. It aims to advance the study of gender, as well as racial, ethnic, cultural, and national diversity.

Journal of Aging Studies This quarterly publication highlights innovative research approaches, critiques of existing theory, and empirical work related to age and aging.

Journal of Contemporary Ethnography Published quarterly, it presents ethnographic studies based on qualitative interviewing and participant observation.

Journal of Health and Social Behavior Published quarterly by the ASA, it uses a sociological perspective in understanding health-related issues; for example, organizational aspects of hospitals or class characteristics of sufferers from various illnesses.

Journal of Marriage and the Family Published quarterly by the National Council on Family Relations, it covers such diverse research areas as family planning, family structure, theories of the family, and cross-cultural studies on fertility. Each issue also features a book review section.

Journal of Personality and Social Psychology Published monthly by the American Psychological Association (APA), this journal is divided into sections on attitudes and social cognition, interpersonal relations and group processes, and personality processes and individual differences.

The Journals of Gerontology Published bimonthly by the Gerontological Society of America, this interdisciplinary journal seeks to promote the scientific study of aging and the life course.

Qualitative Sociology This quarterly journal publishes research based on qualitative research methods, such as interviewing, participant observation, ethnography, historical analysis, and content analysis.

Sex Roles: A Journal of Research Published bimonthly, this journal presents empirical and theoretical examinations of the underlying processes of gender role socialization.

Social Forces Published quarterly, this journal for social research and methodology presents articles on such topics as mobility, class, ethnicity, gender, and education. Each issue includes book reviews.

Social Problems Published five times yearly, this is the official journal of the Society for the Study of Social Problems.

Social Psychology Quarterly Published quarterly by the ASA, it covers empirical and theoretical studies related to social interaction, socialization, labeling, conformity, and attitudes.

Sociological Focus This quarterly journal, sponsored by the North Central Sociological Association, presents articles of general interest to sociologists.

Sociological Forum This official journal of the Eastern Sociological Society, published quarterly, contains articles that link subfields of sociology to other disciplines.

Sociological Inquiry Published quarterly for the chapters of Alpha Kappa Delta (the undergraduate sociology honors society), it covers a wide range of sociological topics.

Sociological Methods and Research Published quarterly, it covers research in qualitative and quantitative methodological issues in the field of sociology. It also includes review articles.

Sociological Perspectives The purpose of this quarterly journal sponsored by the Pacific Sociological Association is to advance research and theory in sociology and related disciplines.

Sociological Quarterly Sponsored by the Midwest Sociological Association, this journal presents research on recent theoretical, methodological, and empirical developments in the field of sociology.

Sociological Review Published quarterly in England, this interdisciplinary journal presents a range of sociological topics, such as social mobility and class structure, and includes book reviews.

Sociological Theory A semiannual publication of the ASA, it is devoted to discussions of new and old sociological theories, theory construction, and theory synthesis. The journal also includes a section for debate and comment on recent theoretical controversies.

Sociology This quarterly journal, which is the official publication of the British Sociological Association, covers the full spectrum of areas in sociology.

Sociology of Education Published quarterly by the ASA, this journal contains papers on human social development as well as on relations among educational institutions.

Symbolic Interaction Published quarterly by the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction, this specialized journal presents empirical and theoretical articles that take a symbolic interactionist perspective.

The preceding list of periodicals related to sociology is not exhaustive. For more references to specialized journals and governmental sources, ask your reference librarian or consult this useful book:

Johnson, William A., Jr., Richard P. Rettig, Gregory M. Scott, and Stephen M. Garrison. 1998. *The Sociology Student Writer's Manual*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

APPENDIX: WEB SITES OF USE TO SOCIOLOGISTS

GUIDES TO PAPER SOURCES

These links will allow you to make subject, author, or title searches to find books and articles for your paper. You must still find the books or articles in the library (except *Annual Review of Sociology* or *JSTOR*). Because these sites

are the best way to find academic material, not just popular or journalistic writing, they are a good place to begin your search. The two most important resources are your campus library catalog for books and *Sociological Abstracts* for articles.

Your College Library Catalog

Most college and university library catalogs are available through computer terminals in the library, and many are accessible through the World Wide Web. Check with a librarian to find out how to access the catalog and whether it is accessible through the Web.

MELVYL, the catalog system for the University of California library, has a facility called SearchLight that links you to specialized search engines in many disciplines, including *Sociological Abstracts* (see below). When you get the results in SearchLight, if the number is underlined, click on the number, not on the name of the resource. <<http://www.melvyl.ucop.edu/>>

Sociological Abstracts

Sociological Abstracts includes articles in several thousand sociology journals, with brief descriptions of the articles' contents. This is by far the best resource for finding sociological articles, but it is only available through college and university libraries. Some colleges and universities allow you to access it through the university Internet Service Provider (ISP), if you access the Web through a university site that ends in .edu. A librarian or your instructor can tell you how to access *Sociological Abstracts* from your campus.

ONLINE CONNECTIONS

Annual Review of Sociology

The *Annual Review* includes current sociological research on specific topics. Downloads are free if your campus has an Internet subscription and you are logged on through a university ISP. <<http://soc.AnnualReviews.org/>>

JSTOR

JSTOR enables you to download from academic journals articles that are more than five years old. This includes the most academically respectable journals in many disciplines, but not very many specialty journals. As with the *Annual Review of Sociology*, your campus must subscribe to this service to gain free access. <<http://www.jstor.org/>>

Links to Other Web Sites

These links will not give you direct access to references to books and articles. However, they point to sites that have either references to books and articles or the actual texts. Material found by this route should be used with more caution because much of it is of poor quality.

Julian Dierkes's Sociology Links at Princeton

<<http://www.princeton.edu/~sociolog/links.html>>

SOCIOSITE: Sociology—Sociological links headquartered at the University of Amsterdam

<<http://www.pscw.uva.nl/SOCIOSITE>>

Yahoo Sociology

<http://dir.yahoo.com/Social_Science/Sociology/>

SocioWeb

<<http://www.socioweb.com/~markbl/socioweb/>>

Research Resources for the Social Sciences

<<http://www.socsciresearch.com/r7.html>>

WWW Virtual Library: Sociology

<<http://www.mcmaster.ca/socscidocs/w3/virtsoclib/index.htm>>

Social Science Information Gateway

<<http://sosig.ac.uk/sociology/>>

LINKS TO TEXT OR DATA

These links give you access to writings about sociology or to quantitative data that you can download. The written materials here may seem the easiest way to find information, but use them with caution if you do not know the authors' qualifications or biases. The sources of data require some knowledge of quantitative techniques, though it may be as elementary as reading a cross-tabulation table.

A Sociological Tour Through Cyberspace

<<http://www.trinity.edu/~mkearl/index.html>>

General Social Survey (GSS) Resources (programs and data may be downloaded; surveys are available for the years 1972–1996; a searchable index of papers utilizing GSS data includes full citations and short abstracts). Introduction to the data set and how to use it.

<<http://www.norc.uchicago.edu/gss/homepage.htm>>

The data can be downloaded from

<<http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/gss99/index.htm>>

Sociology Cases Database Project. A case is a written narrative of some real-life event, situation, or experience centered on a problem or issue faced by a person, group of persons, organization, community, or even an entire society.

<<http://www.nd.edu/~dhachen/cases/>>

FEDSTATS. This is a portal to 70 federal, state, and local government agencies that collect and report statistics.

<<http://www.fedstats.gov/>>

U. S. Census Bureau. This includes reports based on U. S. Census data and Current Population Studies surveys, as well as raw data from censuses.

<<http://www.census.gov>>