

Research Journal 3 - Databases

Create Journal Entry

Journal Instructions ^

At least **three** sources must be posted by midnight SUNDAY in order to receive full credit.

Page 81, Exercise 2.1

Now that your topics are approved, it is time to get down to the business of researching.

In this step of the research process, you will create a Working/Annotated Bibliography (see page 74 for an example). For each source, you must include:

- A citation of the source (in MLA format or as close as possible - we'll talk about MLA in detail in a couple weeks)
- A few sentences summarizing the main ideas of the source
- A couple sentences explaining how this source will be used in your essay - what purpose will it serve?

This is the scholarly part of the research process, where you develop your working knowledge into focused knowledge.

This Journal is worth 20 points.

even publish my bibliographies so others can see them (and I can see theirs). Finally, you can always e-mail your search results page to yourself and organize a bibliography on your own computer.

EXERCISE 2.1

Search Book and Article Databases

Develop your focused knowledge by doing a thorough search using your library's book index and article databases. Unlike in Web and database searches, in book searches it often pays off to begin with broad subject terms. I got better results, for example, when I searched for books on theories of dog training with *animal behavior-canine* than I did with *dog training theories*. Searches that begin broadly might lead you to a relevant chapter in an otherwise irrelevant book.

Choose one of the bibliographies (see pages 73–75) as a way of collecting relevant results. Your instructor may ask you to hand these in to gauge your progress. Remember that online citation machines like bibme.org can help you compile these results in the appropriate format (MLA or APA).



for an assignment. Conventional research papers are frequently organized from the beginning around a thesis or claim. If that's the kind of project you're working on, now would be a good time to craft a sentence that states your most important assertion or main idea. This may well be refined or even discarded later on as you learn more, but it will help with your research this week.

To generate a *tentative* thesis statement at this point, try finishing one of the following sentences:

1. While most people think _____ about _____, I think _____.
2. The most convincing answer to my research question is _____.
3. The main reason that _____ is a problem is _____, and the best solution is _____.
4. Among the causes of _____, the least understood is _____.
5. Though much has been said about _____, very little attention has been paid to _____.
6. All of the evidence so far about _____ points to _____ as a significant cause/solution/effect/problem/interpretation/factor.

You'll be implementing your research strategy this week and next, looking at sources in the library and on the Web. The exercises that follow will help guide these searches, making sure that you don't overlook some key source or reference. Your instructor may ask you to hand in a photocopy of the exercise as a record of your journey.

Keeping Track of What You Find: Developing a Bibliography

For the next two weeks, you're going to collect a lot of material on your research question: PDF copies of articles, books, bookmarked Web pages, images, and perhaps even audio and video files. You will make your life easier if you don't just collect but *record* what you find. Your options include the following:

- **Basic bibliography.** This is the minimalist approach. You simply keep a running list, using the appropriate citation method, of information on each source you think you'll use in your essay. If you're using MLA, for example, this will become your Works Cited page. An online citation machine, like bibme (<http://www.bibme.org>) can help

you build it. You can, of course, wait until the last minute to do this but, trust me, you will regret it.

■ **Working bibliography.** This is one step up from the basic bibliography (see Figure 2.7) and is the simplest form of what's called an "annotated bibliography." A working bibliography provides a brief

Topic: Theories of Dog Training

Focusing Question: Should dogs be trained using positive reinforcement exclusively?

1. Katz, Jon. "Why Dog Training Fails." *Slate Magazine*. N.p. 14 Jan. 2005. Web. 22 Dec. 2010. Web.

Katz argues that most theories of dog training fail to take into account the realities of raising an animal in a "split-level," not a training compound. He calls his own method the "Rational Theory," which he describes as an "amalgam" of techniques that takes into account the actual situation of both dog and owner.

2. Schilder, Matthijs B. H., and Joanne A.M. van der Borg. "Training Dogs with the Help of the Shock Collar: Short and Long Term Behavioural Effects." *Applied Animal Behaviour Science* 85 (2004): 319–334. Medline. Web. 23 Dec. 2010.

Researchers had two groups of German shepherds, one training with shock collars and the other training without them. They then studied both "direct reactions" of dogs to the shock and their later behavior. Study found that dogs trained with shock collars consistently showed more signs of stress during and after training, including "lower ear positions." Finding "suggests that the welfare of these shocked dogs is at stake, at least in the presence of their owner."

3. Shore, Elise, Charles Burdsal, and Deanna Douglas. "Pet Owners' Views of Pet Behavior Problems and Willingness to Consult Experts for Assistance." *Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science*. 11.1 (2008): 63–73. Print.

Study notes that 30 percent of dogs that are given to shelters are there because owners complained of behavior problems; yet only 24 percent of owners surveyed enrolled in obedience classes. Researchers surveyed 170 dog and cat owners and determined that the highest concern was about animals who threatened people, and those owners were most likely to ask for assistance and they mostly turned to the Web unless there was a charge.

FIGURE 2.7 Working Bibliography: An Example

summary of what the source says: what topics it covers and what the basic argument or main ideas are. If you're using a double-entry journal, then you can find the material you need for your summary there. Your annotation may be a brief paragraph or more, depending on the source.

■ *Evaluative bibliography.* In some ways, this is the most useful annotated bibliography of all because it challenges you to not only "say back" what you understand sources to be saying but also to offer some judgments about whether you find them persuasive or relevant. You might comment on what you consider the strengths of the source or its weaknesses. Is writing an evaluative bibliography more work? You bet. But ultimately you are writing your paper as you go because much of the material you generate for the bibliography can be exported right into your essay. Your double-entry journal provides the raw material for these annotations.

Your instructor will tell you what kind of bibliography you should build for this project, but at the very least you should consider maintaining a basic bibliography as you go. Put it on a "cloud," like Google Docs or Evernote, that will store your draft bibliography on the Web and always be available wherever you find a new source—in the library, at home, or in the campus computer lab.

Searching Library Databases for Books and Articles

Despite the appeal of the Web, the campus library remains your most important source of information for academic research. Sure, it can be aggravating. There's that missing book that was supposed to be there or that article that isn't available in full text. You needed that article. Most of all, there's the sense of helplessness you might feel as a relative novice using a large, complicated, and unfamiliar reference system.

In this chapter and the last one, you were introduced to basic library search strategies, knowledge that will help give you some mastery over the university library. Now you'll expand on that knowledge, and at the same time you'll move from a working knowledge of your topic to a deeper understanding, one that will crystallize by reading and writing about what you find.