

Public Speaking Library Exercise

Please note: If you change your topic halfway through researching, you don't need to start over. Researching is an important part of selecting a topic.

You need to activate your ID in the library. They will give you a digit to add to your ID so it will work!

Write a summary of your topic, in just a sentence or two. This will help you to clarify your thoughts, and also give you something to compare your results to later on.

Opposing Viewpoints

Opposing Viewpoints is a selection of opinion pieces on current controversial topics. You can get there by going to the Hostos Library webpage, then Online Databases and selecting the letter "O."

Opposing Viewpoints has very broad topics—no one would think "Oceans" are controversial, but issues of Ocean pollutions, Sonar Use, and off-shore oil drilling are controversial. Make sure you narrow it down.

Opposing Viewpoints has a terrific topic guide and it is often the most useful to use that and browse.

What TOPIC is the best choice for your speech:

Under that topic, what are two articles that disagree with each other? Who originally wrote each & where did it originally appear?

1st:2nd:

Find

one good quote you would like to use in your speech. How would you cite that quote:

BOOKS

Books generally have the most complete information. However, catalogs can only tell us so much. Oftentimes, the perfect book is close to the one we found in the catalog. Use the catalog to find a book:

What is its callnumber?

Is this a useful book? Why or why not?

Going to the stacks (bookshelves), what books are nearby? What is interesting or useful?

Lexis-Nexis for News

No matter what your topic is, you should always be aware of the latest developments. This means searching newspapers, and for that you can use an online database called *Lexis-Nexis*. This service provides daily news, world news, national news, and even transcripts of television and radio broadcasts.

1. Go to Hostos homepage and under "Student Services" click for the "library" or go to the library homepage. On the right hand side there is a link to "Find Articles." Then select "L" and you'll find Lexis Nexis.

2. This brings you to the general news search

- Type in a search term
- Change the date to "Previous 6 months"

If too many things come up—add another term to narrow it down. If I type "Marijuana" I get too much. But if I type "Medical Marijuana New York" there are fewer articles and they are more relevant.

****find one newspaper item on your topic.****

Article title (or "Headline"):

Authors (or "Byline"):

Where was it originally published?

Date and volume of article:

Statistics

Every speech can benefit from solid statistical support. Statistics come in a variety of forms: they are often written into articles or provided by themselves as tables and graphs. I want you to find one statistic, showing your issue is either serious or widespread. Opposing Viewpoints often has statistics, or you might find one in a newspaper article or from the U.S. Census service called "American FactFinder" for a neighborhood, or search the Census.

What is the stat?

Where did this stat originally appear?

What time period does this stat represent?

Think about how to present my statistic. For example, Maria Chang wrote that "Every year there are as many as 500 million cases of malaria worldwide with more than 1 million deaths."¹ That's such big numbers, it is hard to grasp. But if I say "almost 2 people die every minute from malaria and another 1,000 are infected every single minute" it is easier to understand. How can you best present your stat?

¹ Maria Chang. "Malaria Drugs Could Cut Deaths in Africa." *The Washington Post*, 1 March, 2007.

Searching for Articles

The Library subscribes to many databases on the Web. These databases are full of articles from scholarly journals, popular magazines, newspapers, and other publications. Some databases provide full-text, and some give only abstracts. Some treat only a specific discipline, while others are more general. Let's look at a simple, general database called Academic Search Premier.

1. Go to the Library Homepage and click the "On-line Databases," or go to Electronic Information Databases. This is listing of all the databases. Select the first one: Academic Search Complete.
2. Click "Full text journals (and other sources)-General"
3. At this screen, you can choose which of EBSCO's databases you would like to search. For now, we'll search all of them.
4. Type in your key word
5. Click on a topic on the left to further narrow it down.

****find one article on your topic (book reviews do NOT count). Complete the lines below****

What terms did you use? _____

What category did you select to further narrow it down? _____

Article title: _____

Authors or editors: _____

What journal / periodical did this article appear in (sometimes this is called the "source")? _____

Volume / Issue: _____

Page numbers: _____

Is the full text available? _____

Is this article useful to your speech? Why or why not? _____

Internet

The internet is the world's biggest library, but it seems like all the books are on the floor and there is crazy stuff mixed in. Because your research project is only as good as your sources, you must intelligently evaluate all sources that you use, but especially free information from the web. Below, find a website with information on your topic, and evaluate it in the spaces given. As you evaluate, keep in mind, 1) Who wrote it? Are they a good source on this topic 2) is it fair and objective? If not—what is its bias and how would you balance it? 3) Does it link to other sources and tell you where it gets its information? 4) Is it current info? 5) Do the print sources you are finding corroborate the information on this page?

****Find one website that is UNRELIABLE about your topic. Complete the lines below****

Search engine / guide used: _____

Title of website: _____

Address (URL): _____

Author / Publisher / Parent Organization (you may have to hunt around for this): _____

Date last updated (not always present): _____

Using the above guidelines (and common sense), give 3 reasons why it is not reliable.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

Finally

What is the main issue in favor of your topic? _____

What is the main issue against your topic? _____