

Transcript for Big Red Search Cycle



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Regular Transcript

Our Big Red Search Cycle is an introduction to the research process. This is the cycle we suggest you follow to search and write for papers, projects, and other assignments. It is our hope that by following the Big Red-Search Cycle, you will plan for your assignment, chose the right tools search effectively, and write, review, and turn-in a project that you are proud of.

Okay, just to clarify, the purpose of research is to find specific information about a particular topic. For example the students had to research the history of the Second World War for their history project. Or, scientists are exploring the nature of consciousness. Now, how do we find useful information for our assignments? Let's get down to the step-by-step cycle of the Big Red Search Cycle.

Step 1:
Identify what you need to find out
and how you will present your findings.

Check the requirements of the assignment, and if available look at the grading guide also. Are you clear on your topic? How broad is the topic? Do you need to narrow it down? What kind of report do you need to write? Can it be in a format other than a paper, such as digital storytelling, a web page or a blog? Are you supposed to give a well-rounded viewpoint? Pros and Cons? When you have a clear topic and know the requirements, the research will be much easier.

Step 2:
Define search tools

Keep your goals for the project in mind. Writing a two-page review takes much less time and research than writing a 20-page term paper. Plan time to find the right stuff. It's ok to start with Google to help you find good search terms or keywords. Think about the topic and the key terms that are used in your textbooks or in your professor's lectures. How about your class notes and additional readings?

When you have your key terms, think about which resources to use put together a research toolkit. The requirements of the assignment should help you choose the right kinds of sources. Do you need scholarly peer-reviewed articles or more general information? How about books newspapers or journal articles? Can you use Websites? If you need help finding resources for your topic, check out WKU Libraries' Research Guides. Preparing your research toolkit will make the process go more smoothly.

OK, now you have a topic and requirements, a timeline, possible resources, and more importantly search terms that will help you find what you are looking for. You are ready for:

Step 3:
Outline the major points and ideas for the topic
and the basic resources from your research tool kit

Are you following an outline provided by your instructor or are you creating one yourself? The outline gives you a framework that will make the next step more effective. Okay, the outline is ready, now what?

Step 4:
Search authoritative sources.

What are “authoritative sources”? Material published by experts in the field. This is where you use your “research toolkit” and search terms to find the right information. For example, you can find books and eBooks using the Libraries’ online catalog. You can find print journal articles in Periodicals at the Helm Library, or online in our many research databases, or with our E-Journal Finder. These and many other “authoritative sources” can be found in the WKU Libraries’ Research Guides. And remember, don’t skimp on your sources. A good variety will make your paper stronger!

Step 5:
Writing your paper.

Revisit Step 3. Have you correctly cited all your sources? Need help with citations? Are your introduction and conclusion clear? There are lots of good resources online to help you with the writing process. The more organized you are, the better project.

Step 6:
Review to see if you’ve met all the requirements.

Go back to Step 1. (Didn’t I say Red Search Cycle?) Re-read what you have written. Does it make sense?

To avoid plagiarism, make sure you’ve correctly cited your sources. Check, correct, and check again. Go back to any step to improve your final draft. Are you satisfied? There is a lot more to successful research than just these six steps. Breathe a sigh of relief.

And remember, librarians at WKU Libraries are always here to help you. Don’t hesitate to Ask Us! Thanks for watching.

With Timestamp Signatures

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02:59 creating one yourself? The outline gives you a framework that will make the next step more

03:04 effective. Okay, the outline is ready, now what? Step 4: Search

03:10 authoritative sources. What are “authoritative sources”? Material published by experts

03:16 in the field. This is where you use your “research toolkit” and

03:20 search terms to find the right information. For example, you can find books and eBooks

03:26 using TOPCAT, the Libraries’ online catalog. You can find print

03:31 journal articles in Periodicals at the Helm Library, or online in our many research databases,

03:37 or with our E-Journal Finder. These and many other

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