

# Assignment 1: Locating & Evaluating Background Information using Reference Databases

Please list the names of all group members here:

**Purpose of the assignment:** This assignment will introduce you to using online reference resources to help you locate background information on a research topic. I will be looking to see that you can:

- use appropriate reference databases to help you develop your research topic
- search the reference databases appropriately to locate useful material
- choose two reference articles that provide you with sufficient information to help you narrow and focus your research topic
- cite your sources using MLA style
- evaluate your two reference articles and explain how they help you develop your research focus

**Introduction:** To complete this assignment, you will be working with your assigned group. Before you begin searching for information, you first need to choose a research topic together. This topic should be something of interest to members of the group as you will use the same topic continuously with all course assignments. Begin with a broad research topic (you will have an opportunity to narrow the focus later). Topics that generally work best are either controversial or are centered on a dilemma. If you get stumped or have difficulty deciding, you could use suggested topics from the databases (*CQ Researcher & Issues & Controversies*) to help you choose an appropriate topic. Once you have agreed upon a topic, proceed with the instructions below.

## Complete the following instructions:

1. To locate your first reference resource, choose one of the following reference databases from the MCTC Library homepage and indicate the database you selected: *CQ Researcher*, *Issues & Controversies*, or *Gale Virtual Reference Library*. **NOTE:** If you choose to use *Issues & Controversies*, I would like you to use only the "Featured Articles" from this database.
2. Write down the search you conducted to locate the article you selected. If you conducted a keyword search, tell me the keywords you used. If you located the article by browsing the database, tell me how you browsed. You must be very clear; I should be able to do your search and locate the same article.
3. After you select an article, you should take the time to read it (if it is very long, you should at least look it over in its entirety and locate the main points). Tell me why you chose this article and explain what information it provides you that will help you focus your research topic.
4. Include a screen capture of the article and an MLA citation for this resource. Use your MLA guide to help you.

5. Using the same topic, select a different reference database to locate a second reference resource that will help you further develop your research topic. You should look for an article that provides new information or a perspective that is different from the first article you have already located. Choose from one of the following databases and indicate the database you used, keeping in mind it should be a different database than you used to locate the first article: *CQ Researcher*, *Issues & Controversies*, or *Gale Virtual Reference Library*. **NOTE:** If you choose to use *Issues & Controversies*, I would like you to use only the “Featured Articles” from this database.
6. Write down the search you conducted to locate the article. Be very clear; I should be able to do your search and locate the same article.
7. After you select an article, you should again take the time to read it (if it is long, you should at least look it over in its entirety and locate the main points). Tell me why you chose this article and explain what information it provides that is different than the first article and how you think it will help you further focus your research topic. Be very detailed in your explanation.
8. Include a screen capture of the article and an MLA citation for this resource. Use the MLA guide to help you.

**Assess your group work as a whole using the rubric on the next page. Mark the level in each assessment category that you think describes your group’s work. I will mark where I think your work falls and you can compare the results.**

## Locating Background Information Rubric

Requirement	Insufficient (D or F level)	Basic (C level)	Proficient (B level)	Advanced (A level)
	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	7 7.5	8 8.5	9 9.5 10
<p><i>Student has:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Used appropriate databases</i></li> <li>• <i>Used effective search strategies</i></li> <li>• <i>Chosen appropriate and relevant articles</i></li> <li>• <i>Explained how the articles are helpful in developing the topic</i></li> <li>• <i>Provided MLA-style citations for resources</i></li> </ul>	<p>Did not use the required databases</p> <p>Did not explain the search strategy or incorrectly searched the database</p> <p>Chose articles that are not appropriate and/or relevant</p> <p>Did not explain how the articles are helpful for learning more about the topic</p> <p>No citations, or citations not in MLA style</p> <p>Did not follow directions</p> <p>Did not complete the assignment</p>	<p>Used the required databases</p> <p>Conducted a basic keyword search, but with errors</p> <p>Both articles provided general background information on the chosen topic</p> <p>Provided a basic explanation of how the articles are helpful</p> <p>Citations basically follow MLA citation style, with errors</p>	<p>Used the required databases</p> <p>Correctly conducted a keyword search</p> <p>Chose articles that provided background information which complemented each other</p> <p>Provided a detailed explanation of how the articles are helpful and how the second article complements the first</p> <p>Citations follow MLA citation style with only minor style errors</p>	<p>Used the required databases</p> <p>Correctly conducted a complex keyword search or other effective search strategy using the features of the database</p> <p>Chose articles that provided background information, some new ideas, and were clearly helpful in looking at more than one aspect of the topic.</p> <p>Provided a detailed explanation of how the articles are helpful, including reference to specific passages of importance.</p> <p>Citations follow MLA citation style accurately</p>