

# Assignment 3: Locating & Evaluating Books

Please list the names of all group members here:

**Purpose of the assignment:** This assignment will introduce you to the fundamentals of locating and evaluating a book for research purposes. I will be looking to see that you are able to:

- use keywords and concepts related to your research topic to construct a focused search
- use appropriate advanced search techniques such as Boolean operators and truncation
- select two books that directly support one or more aspects of your research topic
- cite your two books using MLA style citation
- explain in precise terms exactly what aspects of your book will be useful in supporting your research questions and thesis statement
- evaluate your book based upon specific criteria

**Introduction:** To complete this assignment you will be working with your assigned group to locate and evaluate two books. Books can provide in-depth information as well as a broad overview of a topic. There are a variety of ways to locate books. You can search library collections via online library catalogs. The MCTC library catalog can be a consortium catalog consisting of more than one hundred academic and special libraries. WorldCat is a library catalog database; it contains records from Minnesota collections as well as collections throughout the United States and beyond.

You can also locate information about books by searching databases such as Books in Print (available at MCTC under *Complete List* of databases). You might also use Google Books or other electronic/digital book databases such as NetLibrary. Keep in mind that books are an excellent resource for scholarly research, but in order to use them to their fullest potential you need to have either the print copy in hand or access to the full-text digital content. The best place to get this level of access is via the Library!

**Complete the following instructions:**

1. Remind me of your focused topic by writing out your argumentative thesis statement here.
2. Write down a brief list of keywords and phrases that relate to your research questions and working argumentative thesis statement.
3. Develop a search string using your keywords and phrases by combining them with appropriate Boolean operators and truncation if/when useful.
4. Locate a book you feel would provide you with information on your focused research topic. Tell me *exactly* how and where you located the book.
5. Provide an MLA citation for the book you've chosen (consult your MLA handout). Include a screen capture for the book (example: item record from the library catalog).

6. Is the book available at the MCTC Library? If it isn't available, how could you get access to the book using the library (purchasing the book yourself is not an option)?
  
7. Determining whether or not a resource is useful is easiest to do if you have the resource in hand. If you cannot locate the full-text or a print copy of the book in a timely manner, use outside sources of information such as *Amazon.com* or *Books in Print* to help you complete the following:
  - a. Write out the specific chapters, sections, or page ranges that would be useful in supporting your topic.
  
  - b. Tell me exactly how you could use the information in this book to support specific aspects of your topic focus, thesis statement and research questions. *Provide a detailed answer.*
  
8. Evaluate your book based upon the criteria in your *Evaluation Resources* handout. For example, do not just tell me the author's name or the publisher's name—tell me *about* the author and *about* the publisher. Use the handout to guide you through the various listed criteria.
  - Author:
  
  - Publisher:
  
  - Type of Information:
  
  - Purpose:
  
  - Sources:
  
  - Currency:
  
  - Style:
  
9. Locate a second book you feel would provide you with information on your focused research topic. You should look for a book that provides new information or a perspective that is different from the first book you have already located. Tell me *exactly* how and where you located the book.
  
10. Provide an MLA citation for the book you've chosen (consult your MLA handout). Include a screen capture for the book (example: item record from the library catalog).

11. Is the book available at the MCTC Library? If it isn't available, how could you get access to the book using the library (purchasing the book yourself is not an option)?
  
12. Determining whether or not a resource is useful is easiest if you have the resource in hand. If you do not have access to the full-text or cannot locate a print copy of the book in a timely manner, use outside sources of information such as *Amazon.com* or *Books in Print* to help you with the following:
  - a. Write out the specific chapters, sections, or page ranges that would be useful in supporting your topic.
  
  - b. Tell me how the information in this book complements the information provided by your first book. Explain how it supports specific aspects of your topic focus, thesis statement and research questions. *Provide a detailed answer.*
  
13. Evaluate your book based upon the criteria in your *Evaluation Resources* handout.
  - Author:
  
  - Publisher:
  
  - Type of Information:
  
  - Purpose:
  
  - Sources:
  
  - Currency:
  
  - Style:

**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 & Evaluating Books Rubric

Requirement	Insufficient (D or F level) 0 1 2 3 4 5 6	Basic (C level) 7 7.5	Proficient (B level) 8 8.5	Advanced (A level) 9 9.5 10
<p><i>The student:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Clearly articulated the process used to identify and locate resource.</i></li>   <li>• <i>Used specific and effective search techniques appropriate for the topic.</i></li>   <li>• <i>Selected a resource that was appropriate for the topic and demonstrated how the resource supports the thesis statement and research topic</i></li>   <li>• <i>Evaluated the resource according to specific evaluation criteria; provided clear and specific evaluations.</i></li>   <li>• <i>Accurately used MLA citation style.</i></li> </ul>	<p>Research process is not clearly stated or is confused in its application. Research process does not adequately take account of the topic focus and is much too broad in application.</p> <p>Consistent mistakes are made in applying basic search techniques. Confusion related to application of search terms and search techniques.</p> <p>One or both books were not appropriate for supporting the topic focus.</p> <p>Little or no demonstration of the appropriateness of the books for topic relevance, or confusion related to resource relevance.</p> <p>Little or no evidence of evaluation. Attempts at evaluation did not support the evaluation criteria areas, and/or were assertions of credibility without evidence to support claims.</p> <p>Did not cite works, or citations contained significant errors that would affect retrievability</p> <p>Did not follow directions</p> <p>Did not complete assignment</p>	<p>Research process is articulated but needs more focus and clarity.</p> <p>Basic search techniques are adequately applied but little or no demonstration of advanced search strategies, or errors are made in the application of search techniques.</p> <p>Both books were adequate for supporting the broad topic focus.</p> <p>Demonstration of the appropriateness of the books for topic relevance is adequate but lacks detail.</p> <p>Clear evidence of evaluation but evaluation lacks depth in most of the criteria areas.</p> <p>Cited works, but citations contained errors</p>	<p>Clear research process that adequately takes account of the issues related to the topic.</p> <p>Clear use of basic or advanced search techniques. Minor errors in application of search techniques.</p> <p>The books were appropriate in supporting specific aspects of the topic.</p> <p>Demonstration of the appropriateness of the books is well documented and clearly stated. Good level of detail provided concerning relevance of the books to thesis statement, research questions, and topic focus.</p> <p>Clear detailed evaluation in most criteria areas.</p> <p>Cited works with minor style errors only</p>	<p>A clear, concise, and well focused research process that takes into account the relevant issues related to the topic.</p> <p>Used basic or advanced search techniques very well and has applied the search techniques well.</p> <p>The books were appropriate in supporting specific aspects of the topic; student provided examples.</p> <p>Demonstration of the appropriateness of the books is very well documented with in-depth analysis. Clear and detailed explanation of how the books support the thesis statement, research questions, and the various aspects of the topic focus.</p> <p>Strong and in-depth evaluation in all criteria areas. Clear understanding of the bias, authority, reliability, and credentials of the author and/or, publisher.</p> <p>Cited works with no errors</p>