

---

When doing research for papers or projects, it is important to think critically about the various sources of information. For example, a book might be great when doing a research paper, but that same book might not be the best source when doing an argumentative essay.

---

## which source is best?

---

There are no right or wrong choices in selecting sources for your paper or project. The important thing to remember is to give all your sources credit in your bibliography, reference list, or works cited page. The following may help you decide which sources are best to use for your assignment:

### ➤ Books

- ◆ Coverage: Typically, books include in-depth coverage on a particular topic.
- ◆ Written by: Specialists or scholars in the field.
- ◆ Timeliness: Currency varies, check the copyright. Information included in books is usually a minimum of 2 years old.
- ◆ Good for: Research and in-depth coverage on topics.
- ◆ To locate books: From the Library's website <<http://dabcc-www.nmsu.edu/library>>, use the Online Catalog to search the Library's collection.

### ➤ Encyclopedias

- ◆ Coverage: Short articles on a variety of topics in alphabetical order.
- ◆ Written by: Specialists or scholars in the field.
- ◆ Timeliness: Currency varies, check the copyright date. Information is usually older. Think carefully about using an encyclopedia if it is over 5 years old!
- ◆ Good for: Pre-research purposes, background information, or an overview of the topic.
- ◆ To locate encyclopedias: Check the DABCC Library reference collection for *Academic American Encyclopedia* (Ref AE 5 .A23) and/or the Library's website for online versions of encyclopedias.

### ➤ Journals

- ◆ Coverage: Specific cases or examples; Research results; Technical information.
- ◆ Written by: Specialists or scholars in the field.
- ◆ Timeliness: Current information.
- ◆ Good for: Case studies, comparisons, technical information
- ◆ To locate journal articles: From the Library's website, choose Article Databases to find journal articles in databases like Expanded Academic ASAP, LexisNexis, Health Reference Center, etc.

NOTE: Journals and magazines are different! To understand some of the differences, see the handout "Comparing Magazines & Journals".

### ➤ Magazines

- ◆ Coverage: Popular topics; Current events.
- ◆ Written by: Professional journalists.
- ◆ Timeliness: Very current information.
- ◆ Good for: General information; Opinion essays; People and/or case profiles; Graphics; Photographs.
- ◆ To locate magazine articles: From the Library's website, choose Article Databases to find magazine articles in databases like General Reference Center Gold, LexisNexis, Health Reference Center, etc.

## ➤ Newspapers

- ◆ Coverage: Various subjects; Current events; Local issues.
- ◆ Written by: Professional journalists.
- ◆ Timeliness: Up to date coverage.
- ◆ Good for: Statistical information; Local coverage; People and/or case profiles.
- ◆ To locate newspapers: From the Library's website, choose Electronic Journals and then select a database to find newspaper articles.

## ➤ World Wide Web – Internet Sources

- ◆ Coverage: Popular topics; Current events; Government, medical, and/or personal information; Research and scholarly information; Games; etc.
- ◆ Written by: Can be written by ANYONE! Be careful!
- ◆ Timeliness: Varies – information can be very current or very outdated.
- ◆ Good for: The Internet can be good for many things (general discussions, research, government information, etc.). Make sure you ALWAYS evaluate your resources before using the information in your paper or project! (See "Evaluating Web Sources" handout.)
- ◆ To locate Web sources: From the Library's website, select Internet Resources to find a list of search engines or click on *Search* on your Web browser.