1. **State your research topic/question.** Tip: Your topic should be more than a noun (diabetes, WWII, etc.)

2. **Break your topic/question down into main concepts or ideas.** Tip: Use one word or phrase per box.

3. **Brainstorm synonyms, alternate spellings, and related topics for each concept.** Tip: Use dictionaries, thesauruses, Wikipedia, textbooks, concept maps, and more to help you get ideas.

4. **Use this chart to determine the kind(s) of information you need.** Check all the boxes that apply.

   - Background information
   - Historical information
   - Biological information
   - Opinions
   - Criticism or analysis
   - Statistics
   - Current events
   - Research results
   - Financial information
   - Other?

5. **Where have you already looked for information?**

6. **Use words from #2 and #3 to search for information using MeL databases:** [http://mel.org/databases](http://mel.org/databases). Try at least two databases and fill out the chart below. Databases you may want to try: AcademicOneFile, Gale Virtual Reference Library, GeneralOneFile, InfoTrac Newstand, or Opposing Viewpoints in Context.

   - Which search terms were most successful? Database #1
   - Which search terms were most successful? Database #2

7. **As you learn more, refine your research question, try different search words, and explore more databases.** Tip: Your first search isn’t always your best search! Be willing to look again and dig deeper.

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**Need Help? Contact a WCC Librarian:** [http://www.wccnet.edu/resources/library/asklibrarian/](http://www.wccnet.edu/resources/library/asklibrarian/)

Adapted from: Tarleton State University’s Research Worksheet [http://www.tarleton.edu/library/pdfs/researchworksheet.pdf](http://www.tarleton.edu/library/pdfs/researchworksheet.pdf)

& York County Community College’s “Research Game Plan” [http://virtual.yccc.edu/tutorials](http://virtual.yccc.edu/tutorials)