

Information Literacy Website

"Information literacy forms the basis for lifelong learning. It is common to all disciplines, to all learning environments, and to all levels of education. It enables learners to master content and extend their investigations, become more self-directed, and assume greater control over their own learning." (The Association of College and Research Libraries Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education. ACRL is a division of the American Library Association.)

Getting started.

For effective database searches.

Establish your research question. Determine key words. Use quotation marks to keep related terms together, and the word AND to produce better results. Use the word OR to create alternate key words in your search. Use an asterisk * to truncate words so that all forms of the root will be searched. Exclude terms with the word NOT. Use subject terms (also known as descriptors) to identify the main focus of an article in a database. Ask the librarian if you need assistance with searching databases. librarian@gratz.edu

Finding materials.

Scholarly Articles. Written by researchers, professors and students, the articles that appear in research and academic journals that are peer reviewed, giving them a high amount of credibility. They involve excellent research and rigorous reviews before being printed. Using a database will give you more high quality, focused results compared to utilizing a search engine such as google or yahoo. Gratz College subscribes to the Index to Jewish Periodicals. Also, we currently have a trial subscription to Jewish Studies Source. (If you would like to access these databases, please tell the librarian, and you will be sent information on establishing a password to sign in.) For more citations, use jstor.org, also with search techniques described above.

Evaluating a citation. Consider the following aspects: Author, publication date, length, abstract, and peer-reviewed status. In regard to the author, consider credentials and affiliation. Publication date may be of significance depending on your topic and how recent the information should be. The length of the article may indicate how much depth is included, and an abstract can help one decide if it contains the information that is sought. Peer-reviewed status can, as previously mentioned, reflect on the credibility of the contents

Obtaining the full text. If you find a citation of an article on jstor that you wish to see, you can sign up for MyJSTOR and access three articles every two weeks. If that's too limiting, you may request articles by contacting the librarian who will order them for you through Interlibrary Loan (as with any citations you see on Index to Jewish Periodicals and Jewish Studies Source), and send them to you electronically. We anticipate having more online journals in the near future. Gratz College also has a wonderful archive of recent and past print journals. Their titles appear in the online catalog.

Once you've obtained an article and read it, you need to decide if you wish to include it in your research. The following issues should be considered:

Who is the intended audience? Is there enough depth for your research needs?

Is the article objective? Is the article based on facts or opinions?

What is the range of the information on the topic? Is the article a summary of published works or in-depth reporting of original research? Does it provide any new information? Is the article based on primary or secondary sources?

Is the substance of the article presented clearly? Are conclusions drawn?

Does the article contain cited references? This demonstrates that the author's conclusions are based on the work of other experts.

Is there supporting documentation; are there charts, graphs used to present data?

Books.

Search your college library's catalog: <http://www.gratz.edu/pages/search-the-collection>

Use www.worldcat.org to find libraries that have copies of books near you.

Utilize our Tri-State College Library Consortium to access books on your own in libraries in the region of Gratz College. <http://www.gratz.edu/pages/access-to-regional-libraries>

Coming soon:

Writing a research paper with cited sources.