



**Selkirk
College
Library**

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Important: Read This

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Library Research: A Workbook for SEG

(School of Environment & Geomatics)

Library research is an important skill for student success. This assignment will take you step-by-step through the research process.

In completing this workbook you will learn how to find articles, reports, and books for use in writing a research paper for Technical Writing & Communications (TWC) or for another course.

FYI: Sections marked FYI are “for your information.”

A Librarian from Selkirk College will be evaluating your completed assignment. Contact us for assistance.

Contact Us

Selkirk College Librarians are available to help you with your research. We can assist you by email, by phone, or in person at the Castlegar campus.

- Email: reference@selkirk.ca
- Phone: 1-888-953-1133 ext. 21229 (or ask for the Library)
- Phone: (250) 365-1229 (local call)
- Online: <http://library.selkirk.ca/>

Step 1: The Search Plan

Have a plan before beginning your research. There are 3 parts to a search plan:

1. Topic

Pick a topic that interests you.

- Example: Genetically modified crops

2. Research Question

What do you want to know about your topic? What question do you want to answer?

Tip: *A research question should not be too simple. It shouldn't be answered by yes or no.*

Example: What are genetically modified crops?

- The answer is a fact, and can be found in a single source.

Tip: *A research question should not be too broad, or too big.*

Example: What are the impacts of genetically modified crops?

- The impacts are many and varied. A book could be written on this.

Sample research question:

“How has the use of genetically modified crops in North America affected food production?”

3. Search Terms

Identify the main concepts of your research question. These will be your **search terms**.

Tip: Use nouns. These may be words or phrases.

Search Terms					
<i>Line 1: Identify the main concepts from your research question.</i>					
1	genetically modified crops	AND	North America	AND	food production
<i>Line 2: Think of alternate terms (or synonyms) for these concepts.</i>					
2	transgenic plants	AND	Canada	AND	farming

- We have identified 6 search terms that can be used to find information in library databases.

Step 1: My Search Plan

Make a plan before beginning your research. Write your search plan out here:

a) **Topic**

b) **Research Question**

What do you want to know about your topic?

Tip: See page 2 for important tips & examples

c) **Search Terms**

Identify the main concepts of your research question. *Tip: circle or highlight them.*

- Use nouns
- Search terms should be single words or short phrases

See page 2 for tips & examples

Search Terms					
<i>Use the main concepts from your research question to plan your first search. Write down two or three search terms.</i>					
1		AND		AND	
<i>Write down alternate search terms. These will be synonyms or related concepts.</i>					
2		AND		AND	

► Use your Search Plan to find information on your topic in library databases.

Step 2: Finding Research Articles Using Discovery

The Library subscribes to many databases that you can search to find journal and magazine articles and reports. These databases can be accessed on campus or remotely.

Remote Access

You can access Library databases remotely using:

- Your home computer
- A wireless device on campus

Login

You will be prompted to login when you try to access Library databases from a personal computer. Login using your campus wide login (CWL).

Discovery

Discovery is a tool that allows you to search all library collections in one search. This includes our article and our book databases.

Step 1: Go to the Library homepage > <http://library.selkirk.ca>

To access Discovery: Under FIND choose > **Discovery: Search All**

Articles

Search Discovery to find **journal** or **magazine articles** on your topic. Find articles that will help you answer your research question.

Step 2: Choose your search terms

Tip: See your *Search Plan* (page 3)

1st search term: _____

AND

2nd search term: _____

AND

3rd search term (optional): _____

Step 3: Type your search in the search boxes. Click **search**.

- enter 2 - 3 search terms for your topic
- combine your search terms using **AND**

▪ **How many articles (results) were found?** _____

Tips for Improving Your Results	
Modify Your Search	Use Limiters
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ check your spelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ limit by publication date
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ try different search terms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ limit by source type (magazines or journals)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ use single words or short phrases as search terms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ see what other options the database has for limiting results
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ use AND to combine search terms	

Limiting Your Results: Academic Articles

Limit To

- Available in Library Collection
- Academic (Peer Reviewed) Articles
- Book Catalogue

1947 Publication Date 2017

Find the Academic (Peer Reviewed) Articles limiter in the left column.

Peer reviewed articles are academic or scientific works evaluated by other professionals in the same field.

• **How many articles?** _____

Find a Primary Source Article

Primary source articles are written by researchers and report on original findings from studies. Most commonly found in peer reviewed journals, they can also be reports from government agencies, papers presented at conferences, or full length monographs (books).

The factors that you will be considering for choosing a primary source article are:

- If there is a description of methodology
- If there is a 'results' section
- What the abstract tells you about the paper

Choose an Article

Choose an article from your result list that you judge to be strongly related to your research question. It must be a **primary source** document.

Tip: *Click on the title to see the full record*

Write down the citation elements for the article you chose.

- **Author / Authors**

Name(s): _____

- **Title of Article**

Full title: _____

- **Publication Information**

Title of journal or magazine (source): _____

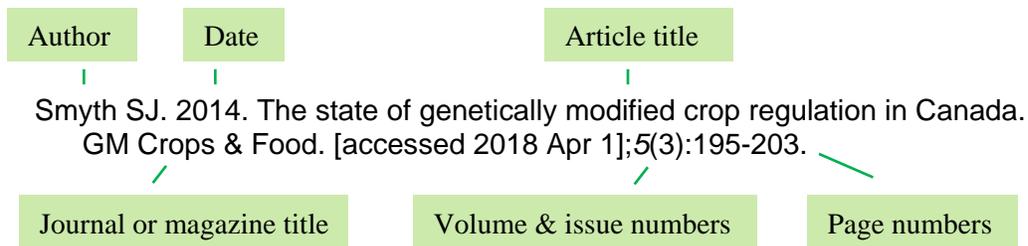
Volume / issue number: _____

Date: _____

Pages: _____

FYI: Article Citation (Scientific Style)

A citation is all of the information needed to identify a source.



Emailing a Full Text Article

Email is a useful way to keep track of the articles you find.

1. Click on the title of an article that has full text (html or pdf)
2. Click on E-mail  Tip: *Look in the right side column under Tools*
3. Enter your email address
4. Enter a subject
5. Choose a citation format (APA, MLA etc.)
5. Click SEND

Step 3: Search for Technical Reports

There is a large amount of research generated by organizations such as government ministries, non-profits, institutes and think tanks. This is called 'gray literature.'

- Go to the Library homepage > <http://library.selkirk.ca>
To access databases choose > FIND > [Databases](#)
- Choose **Environment & Geomatics** from the **Add Subject** drop down menu
Click **Apply**
- Choose one of the following databases:

Database	Strength
Canadian Electronic Library	<i>Government & NGO documents</i>
Canadian Government & Legislative Libraries Online Publications	<i>Canadian government documents</i>
US Forest Service Research Publications	<i>Forestry, environment, wildlife & related topics</i>

Name of database: _____

Tip: *These databases may not provide as many search options. Start with a simple keyword search. If you get too many results, look for an 'advanced' tab and limit your search terms to the title or citation field.*

- Run a search on your topic.

1st search term: _____

AND

2nd search term (optional): _____

- Record the citation elements of the document that you judge to be useful

Title : _____

Author(s): _____

Publisher: **Tip:** *The organization may be both the author and publisher*

Date: _____

URL (optional): _____

Step 4: The Library Catalogue

Search for Books & eBooks

The library catalogue is a database of books and ebooks (electronic books) that can be borrowed from the Selkirk College Library. Use your research skills to find books on your topic.

- Go to the Library home page > <http://library.selkirk.ca>
Choose FIND > Books

Search Terms

- Use your Search Plan (page 3) to choose your search terms OR use new search terms you have learned over the course of your research.

Tips: *Our book catalogue is a small database. One or two search terms should suffice. Remember to combine search terms using **AND***

Example: **Water** AND **Government policy**

1st search term: _____

AND

2nd search term (optional): _____

Choosing a Title

Choose a title from your search results that you think will be useful for your topic.

Tip: *Click on the **Title** to see the full record*

- **Call number**

Tip: *The call number is used to find the book in the library*

Look at the full record to see all of the data elements needed to create a citation for this title. Record the citation elements below.

Tip: *Choose the **Catalog Record** link*

- **Author(s) / Editor(s)**

Name(s): _____

- **Title**

Full title: _____

- **Publication Information**

Place of publication: _____

Name of publisher: _____

Year when the item was published: _____

Tip: *If you need current information a recent publication date is important*

Step 5: Citation & Style Guides

Citations

Provide complete citations for all of the sources that you cite in your research paper. A citation includes all of the information needed to identify a source. A list of all the sources may be called “References” or “Works Cited” or “Bibliography” depending on the style guide you are using.

A style guide provides instructions for how to cite sources such as books or articles. The most commonly used style guides at Selkirk College are APA, MLA, Chicago and Scientific (CSE).

Help is available on the Library website: Help > [Citation & Style Guides](#)

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is using work or ideas from another source without acknowledgment.

You can avoid plagiarism by correctly citing all of your sources.

Quiz: Is it Plagiarism?

Test your knowledge of plagiarism by answering the following questions:

1. You find a great idea in an article, so you use it in your paper. You don't bother to cite the source of the idea because you've expressed it in your own words. Is this plagiarism?

Yes, it's plagiarism

No, it isn't

2. You copy a sentence directly from an article you found. You cite the source, but you forget to put quotation marks. Is this plagiarism?

Yes, it's plagiarism

No, it isn't

3. You need an image for your essay. You go online and find one. You don't cite the source of your image because you got it off of the internet. Is this plagiarism?

Yes, it's plagiarism

No, it isn't

Source: Simon Fraser University Library. (2015). *Plagiarism tutorial*. Retrieved from <https://canvas.sfu.ca/courses/15986>

Complete the [Plagiarism Tutorial](#) to learn more about plagiarism.