



Cited from: <https://www.csuohio.edu/writing-center/reading-sources-for-your-research-paper>

Quick Notes on: GATHERING READING SOURCES FOR YOUR RESEARCH PAPER

Beginning a research paper can be overwhelming unless you know how to set goals for yourself when you read. Think of gathering sources as a search for research that you then need to *organize and sort through* to find only the best examples.

begin with - 40 titles in databases

find - 20-30 available sources

skim - 10-12 good ones

read - 5-6 excellent sources

For a research paper of about 7-10 pages, you should think of gathering 40 titles on your subject from a variety of places (see below). But only 20-30 will be available to you (some will be missing, others you will have difficulty accessing online, others are misleading and don't relate to your subject at all). When you do find what is useful and available, then **skim** these sources and make a quick decision: yes or no? Those that look good (that answer your research question) you save. Get rid of those that don't address your specific question. Finally, we come to **READING**. Save precious time only for those 5-6 **BEST** sources (often these are from the library database); those are the ones you want for paraphrases and quotes in your eventual draft.

VARIETY OF SOURCES

Most students need a variety of sources, not just books or journal articles or web sites. Think of examining the following sources for your paper:

- books, chapters in books (books are often easier to read than journals)
- journal articles
- magazine and newspaper articles
- Internet Web sites



You find these sources through databases on the computer or in the library reserve section. At Confederation College, you can access our database through the library web site using the following steps (these steps are also in the pdf – Finding articles in the CC Library databases):

- Access the College Library using the following link <http://www.confederationnc.on.ca/library>
- If you are off campus, you may have to use your Library PIN
- Scroll down to “Find” and select the Articles and Databases link
- Search by subject
- Browse through the databases to find one that matches your subject. These databases contain access to hundreds of current journals, newspapers and journals.
- Click on a database link. HINT: the Proquest or EBSCOhost databases have many journals and publications. You may also be familiar with the “Canadian Points of View” database that provides a multitude of viewpoints on a topic. Scroll down to find a database that matches your topic.

ANNOTATING AND NOTETAKING

For sources you have skimmed and perhaps decided upon, make up annotating cards as follows:

Goleman, D. (2012) Emotional Intelligence. New York: Bantam. p. 1-345.
---looks great for my subject, especially Chpt. 9 on marriage

The card has the usual bibliographical information and a quick note to remind yourself about what you wanted to read.

Another set of notecards can be used for your quotes and paraphrases. The two cards (annotating and note-taking cards) make writing easier because your cards can be indexed according to subjects. See the example below:

Goleman success in marriage (my subject)

143 successful couples "show each other that they are being listened to. Since feeling is often exactly what the aggrieved partner is really after, emotionally an act of empathy is a masterly tension reducer" (p. 234).

**Writers often keep 2 sets of cards so they can easily use their research in different projects.