

Research Tips

Where to find information






When using Google, try to narrow your search so your results are more relevant. Advanced Search allows you to limit your results by place of publication, date and website address ending (e.g. ac.uk, .gov.uk, .org etc.).

Choose your search keywords carefully. Avoid typing questions into the Google search box, instead pick out the most important words in your essay question or assignment brief.

If you cannot find good results with the keywords you have chosen, try brainstorming to think of alternative search terms with similar meanings.

Online Databases

As a WKC student, you have access to lots of good resources available through the online databases. These can be found on **Moodle** on the **Learning Resources** pages under **E-Resources**. The buttons on this page link to the various databases which can provide you with different types of information. Some of the most useful are:

		
This allows you to read newspaper and magazine articles online.	Access to e-books.	Background information, facts and figures on social issues.

You can access the databases in college or at home. If you have any trouble accessing databases from home, call the Learning Centre on **020 7802 8351**.

Books

If you are searching for a book as part of your research, you can use the online catalogue to find out what is available in the Learning Centre. The link to the catalogue is on the **Learning Resources** pages on **Moodle**. Alternatively, ask a member of Learning Centre staff to help you locate a suitable book.



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How to decide if information will be useful

Asking yourself questions about the relevance and reliability of information sources will help you to decide if they are useful or not.

Questions to ask about the reliability of a source

Look at the presentation of a website – does it look professional?

Check the spelling and grammar used on websites – can you spot any mistakes?

Check when a website was last updated. Does it have out-of-date information or broken links?

Is the author knowledgeable about the subject? Are they an established writer or expert?

Is the source biased – are the arguments logical and backed up with evidence?

Is a website trying to sell you something?

Questions to ask about the relevance of sources

Is the information too general or too complicated?

Is the information up-to-date? If you are looking for historical information – does it cover the right time period?

What country does the source come from?

What readership is the source intended for – is it at a high enough level?

Read your essay question again – will the source help you to answer this?

