



## LRC Research Top Tips

Be diligent with your online research, do not assume the first piece of information you find online will be correct. It's important to remember that generic searches on Google and Wiki may generate information that hasn't been validated or fact checked.

The starting point for any research project should be to clarify what information you are looking for. Review what you have been asked to research and make sure you understand the question that has been set by your teacher.

## Online Research Tips

Use keywords to refine your search. Accurate and credible information can be found by defining your research parameters. Remember to consider synonyms and phrases to target your research. Search terms need to be specific and descriptive. Also check your spelling!

Below are some Top Tip shortcuts to get to the good stuff:

- If you are looking for information that is an exact match, put a word or phrase inside quotation marks " ".
- If you want to combine a search, put 'OR' between words or phrases.
- If you wish to exclude words from your search put a '-' in front of the word you wish to omit.
- To search for an unknown word, place a '\*' with your word or phrase.
- Looking at domain names can be a useful tool to tell you what type of person or organisation manages the site. For site specific information use 'site:ac.uk' at the end of your search to narrow your field of information down to trusted, fact-checked sources from UK academic institutions.
- Using Google Scholar as a search engine provides a simple way to broadly search across many disciplines and sources.

## Evaluating Websites

When you find a site, here are a few questions to ask yourself on a first skim read:

- Who is the author? Can you contact them?
- Look at the date, how current is the information?
- Is it fact or opinion? Is it a balanced article?
- Are there links? Do they back up what your website says?
- Can you find any other websites for validation?

If you are unable to answer any of the above questions, you need to keep researching.

## Fact Checking

- When you have found information you want to use, remember to fact check your sources. It is recommended that you do this 3 times to ensure the information is correct. Although this may seem time consuming, it avoids mistakes ending up in your work. Using fact checking sites such as [fullfact.org](http://fullfact.org) is a great way to ensure you use credible, independently fact checked information.

## Print Based Research

- Books are fact-checked prior to publication so are considered to be reliable sources of information. Although we don't have access to libraries at the moment, accessing ebooks for your research through Herts Libraries Borrow Box is easy once you have an account set up.
- If you have a library card you can also access Encyclopedia Britannica, another trusted source of information, through Herts Libraries.
- If you are trying to get a start in a subject, you can use Wikipedia by consulting the bibliography (book) section (found at the bottom of the page), using it for targeted book sources.

## Plagiarism

- Plagiarism is where you use another person's work by copying ideas or information from a website/book and submitting it as your own unique work without giving credit to that person. It is academic theft.
- If you wish to reference information you can use quotations to indicate that the text you have used is not your own. It is also important to cite your sources which means including the full name of the source plus the date it was published at the end of the document.

## Ask for Help

- If you need help with your research, please contact either:  
Miss Lambert ([rlambert@ashlyns.herts.sch.uk](mailto:rlambert@ashlyns.herts.sch.uk)) or  
Miss Sillence ([hsillence@ashlyns.herts.sch.uk](mailto:hsillence@ashlyns.herts.sch.uk))

We are here to help you!