EGR 108 Library research exercise—Fall 2004
(adapted from The Curious Researcher, Ballenger, 1999)

Use this exercise to help you find resources for your research paper. The completed assignment is to be handed in Thursday, 9/9.

Step 1: Pinpointing your topic

Describe your topic in a few words.

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Step 2: Finding useful subject headings

Find the book listing Library of Congress Subject Headings at the library. This gives standard headings used by most libraries for cataloging information. Look up your topic, and write down some possible related search terms from the LCSH. You will use these later.

Subject headings:

Step 3: Finding “layperson-level” information on your topic

Encyclopedias will give you a broad view of your topic, which is a good place to start. Check the Encyclopedia Britannica index, and find some listings that match your topic. Look up the articles. Select the one that seems most useful, and write down:

- The title
  _______________________________________________________________________

- Something interesting you found out from reading the article
  _______________________________________________________________________

- Any promising citations (references to other books or articles) that you find in the article’s bibliography
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**Step 4: Finding books as references**

Check the university’s online catalog for books that are related to your topic. Your best results will probably come from using the Library of Congress Subject Headings that you found in Step 2. Record the call number, author, and title for at least one book on the topic.

- Call number ______________  Author ____________________________
- Title __________________________

Go find the book in the stacks. Write down the first sentence, or its first fifteen words, of the first full paragraph on page 10 of the book:

____________________________________________________________________

If you can’t find the book, find out at the circulation desk if it’s out, lost, or otherwise unavailable. Note its status here:

**Step 5: Finding general-audience periodicals as references**

**Use an Online Database in Galileo to search periodicals** (for example, *Academic Search Premier* or *Research Library*) for articles on your topic. Find what looks like a useful citation, and record:

- Subject heading __________________________
- Author __________________________
- Title __________________________
- Title of periodical (in full) __________________________
- Volume or issue number and date __________________________
- Page numbers covered by the article __________________________

Check the online catalog (using the “title search” option) to see if the periodical is held at the Tarver Library. If not, ask the librarian whether or not you can get it through Interlibrary Loan.

Ask the librarian whether the library has the journal you’ve found; if not, is there a way you can get it through inter-library loan?  yes ______  no ______
Step 6: Finding specialized periodicals as references

Use a bound index or online database (In Galileo) such as the Social Sciences Index, General Science Index, or Business Periodicals Index to look for scholarly articles on your topic. Record one citation:

- Subject heading
- Author(s)
- Title
- Title of periodical
- Volume, date, page numbers
- Available in Mercer library? yes _____ no ____

Step 7: My Sources, V. 1

By the time you’ve completed these 7 steps, you should have a fairly good idea of some promising sources for researching your topic. Record below three sources (book or periodical) that you may be able to use in preparing your report. Use a standard bibliographic style to record them, stating which style you are using.

NOTE: Style manuals describing bibliographic styles (APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.) are available from the Reference Desk.

Source 1:

Source 2:
Source 3:

Any other possibilities: