BCC Libraries: Research Basics

Accessing the Library off Campus

When accessing library resources from off campus, you will need to enter the **barcode** from the back of your BCC Campus Card.

![BCC Libraries Remote Access](image)

When you are off campus (or in locations without a recognized IP), you will be required to log in with your BCC Campus Card ID.

Contacting BCC Research Librarians

Research librarians are available on every BCC Campus.

**Book-A-Librarian**

Our Book-A-Librarian service allows you to make an appointment with any of our research librarians on any campus: [http://bristolcc.libcal.com/appointments/](http://bristolcc.libcal.com/appointments/)

**Ask-A-Librarian**

If you cannot make an appointment, consider contacting BCC Librarians in the following ways:

* **In Person:**
  A librarian is available on each campus during most operating hours.

* **By Chat:**
  A librarian can be reached by chat through the BCC Library Website.

* **By Telephone:**
  - Attleboro: 774.357.3745
  - Fall River: 774.357.2108
  - New Bedford: 774.357.4009
  - Taunton: 774.357.4001
Develop a Research Question and Strategy

Your research question is very important when gauging the scope of your research. Developing a clear, focused, and interesting question can help to determine your success.

Explore your topic through questioning
- Ask open ended questions like how? and why?
- Ask yourself why your topic is important- Why does it matter to you, and why should it matter to others?
- Reflect and identify the questions you feel are worth exploring through research.

Determine and evaluate your research question
Research questions should be specific enough to be well covered in the space available. Questions shouldn’t have simple yes or no answers, and should require research and analysis.
- Take your topic from general to specific.
- Ask yourself if your question is clear and focused.
- Does your research question have enough complexity to fill the pages required by the assignment?

Hypothesize
Research is rarely linear. Consider the directions your research will take you.
- Who is an authority on your topic, and how can you find that information?
- If making an argument, what evidence will you need to support your claims?
  - Why is your argument important?
  - How might others challenge your argument?
- What types of sources will you need to support the claims that you are making?

Sample Research Questions:
Your research question should focus in on a specific angle of an over-arching topic; it should be clear to yourself and the reader which question you are trying to answer; it should be complex enough to invoke thought and interest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is your question clear?</th>
<th>Is your question complex?</th>
<th>Is your question focused?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unclear:</strong> Why are social networking sites harmful?</td>
<td><strong>Too Simple:</strong> How are doctors addressing diabetes in the U.S.?</td>
<td><strong>Unfocused:</strong> What is the effect on the environment from global warming?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clear:</strong> How are online users experiencing or addressing privacy issues on social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter?</td>
<td>** Appropriately Complex:** What are the common traits of those suffering from diabetes in America, and how can these commonalities be used to aid the medical community in the prevention of the disease?</td>
<td><strong>Focused:</strong> How is glacial melting affecting the penguins in Antarctica?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Adapted from Indiana University Libraries*
Finding Articles

Academic journal articles, or **periodicals**, are often authored by scholars active in a particular field. They provide a close and in-depth look at a particular topic. Authors of academic journal articles often provide original research data and references to support their work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Scholarly &amp; Peer Reviewed Articles</th>
<th>Magazines &amp; Newspapers</th>
<th>Trade Journals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academics or Students</td>
<td>General Public</td>
<td>Professionals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Level</td>
<td>College or Graduate School</td>
<td>High School or Equivalent</td>
<td>High School or College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documentation</td>
<td>Fully Documented</td>
<td>No Documentation or Minimal Documentation</td>
<td>Some Documentation, but not Consistent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authorship</td>
<td>Academician or Credentialed Research</td>
<td>Staff, Free-Lance, or Contributing Professional Writer</td>
<td>Staff Reporter or Free-Lance Writer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples</td>
<td>The Lancett, New England Journal of Medicine</td>
<td>Newsweek, Psychology Today, Time</td>
<td>Progressive Grocer, School Administrator</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Definitions:**

**Periodicals** are published at regular, periodic intervals through the year.

**Trade Journals** contain information for people working in a particular professions.

**Scholarly or Peer Reviewed Articles** have been reviewed by scholars in the same field as the author.

Article Databases

Subject specific databases can be located using the library website. By choosing either Databases A-Z or Databases by Subject, you can locate the correct database for your research.

![Article Databases](image)

Subject Research Guides

A list of subject guides can also be found on the library home page by clicking on **subject guides**. This will display research guides by topic that will provide research resources in each academic subject.
Keyword Searching in Library Databases

Choosing Keywords
Choosing your search terms, or keywords, correctly can mean the difference between relevant and irrelevant results. Start with your thesis question for inspiration on choosing the most relevant keywords.

Example thesis question: How are concussions related to extra-curricular high school sports affecting academic success in adolescents?

Think of keywords and alternative keywords that may be helpful for your search.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main keywords:</th>
<th>concussions</th>
<th>“academic success”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alternative keywords</td>
<td>OR CTE OR “brain injury”</td>
<td>OR grades OR graduation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Boolean Logic
Using Boolean Logic in your advanced search means that you are using command words (Boolean Operators) to connect your search terms. Boolean Logic allows you to conduct a more specific search and find relevant and specific information using and, or, and not.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AND</th>
<th>OR</th>
<th>NOT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Search results will contain both keywords</td>
<td>Search results will contain at least one or both of the keywords</td>
<td>Search results will not contain the keyword following not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>concussions AND “academic success”</td>
<td>concussions OR CTE</td>
<td>concussions NOT fractures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using Boolean Logic in an Advanced Search
Boolean Operators may be used in most academic databases. In this example, an advanced search is used and the terms have been separated into separate boxes.

Nesting
Boolean operators can also be used by nesting your search terms using parentheses in place of the boxes in the advanced search.
Searching Toolkit

Phrase Searching:
Phrase searching allows you to search for a specific phrase, as opposed to individual words. The quotation marks act as a bracket, grouping the words together. Use quotations on two-or-more word phrases.

*Example:*

older adult = 136,421 results
“older adult” = 14,705 results

Truncating
Truncation allows a researcher to run a single search for a word with multiple possible endings. Most academic databases use the asterisk (*) to truncate, however, check the HELP menu for specifics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Truncated Word</th>
<th>Possible Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>vaccin*</td>
<td>vaccine, vaccinate, vaccinated, vaccinating, vaccination, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wildcards
Use wildcards in databases to search for an unknown character or words with multiple spellings. Most databases will either use a question mark (?) or a pound sign (#) to represent wildcards. Replace each unknown character with the wildcard symbol.

*The database will not find “net” because the ? indicates a missing letter.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wildcard #</th>
<th>Possible Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>color#</td>
<td>color or colour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Limiters
The database allows you to limit to specific types of articles, specific ranges of publication, or specific geographies (among others). You can apply limiters before you search or after you have run the search.
Finding Books, eBooks, and Media

Books & eBooks
Books and ebooks provide in-depth coverage on a particular topic. They provide valuable background information on the topic, including nuanced aspects of the topic at hand. Books can also provide an overview of all issues that may pertain to a particular topic.

Search for books, ebooks, and media from the homepage of the library.

As a part of the SAILS network, BCC gives you access to most Southern New England Public Libraries. To find books specifically at BCC, select the library from the list on the left.

Thousands of eBooks can be found by directly in our eBook databases, eBook Central, Axis 360, Biblioboard, and eBook Collection.

Streaming Media
BCC provides access to several streaming media databases. Films on Demand and Kanopy both provide streaming content, both entertaining and educational. Find these databases on the Database A-Z list.

Use Kanopy to browse by subject, filmmaker, and even foreign languages.
Finding Information on the Web

Websites can help you to gain a broad understanding of a topic, however the information tends to be shallow. Search engines like Google are an excellent tool for finding statistics and other data sets.

Authority

- Check the URL: is the website built to mimic a more well-known news group or company? Know what each URL domain indicates about the content and authority of the site.
  - .com: a commercial site
  - .edu: an educational site
  - .gov: a government site
  - .net: a personal site
  - .org: an organizational site
- Who produced the site? Check the About Us page to understand more about the purpose of the site.
- Who is the author of the page? Are they credible and authoritative? Is there a way to contact the author or organization?
- Use Google or another search engine to research the author or organization of your source. Look for content from external websites about the person or organization to give you additional insight.

Bias and Objectivity

- What is the purpose of the site, why was it created?
- Does the site push a specific viewpoint or agenda?
- Can you detect circular reasoning or logical errors? Do you detect language that appears to attack someone personally, as opposed to challenging his/her ideas?

Sources and Documentation

- Look for sources: is there adequate documentation for factual statements? If sources are available, are they reliable? Are sources cultivated from multiple sources or from one source only (including self-referential sources)?
- Can you verify the information from a second, separate, and reliable source? Cross-check suspicious information from widely-recognized credible sources.
- Is there enough information on the page to create a citation? (Author, title, date, etc.).

Quality and Currency

- Evaluate the quality of the content: is the writing without error, well-sourced, and clear?
- Is the information on the page current? Is the site updated regularly? Is there a news section, and if so, how recently was it updated?
- Are statistics current and well sourced?
- Do photographs appear to be doctored, photoshopped, or altered in any way?

Read and Decide

- Read the information on the page you would like to use as a source before you decide to use it in your research. Do you feel that the source is credible? Would you be comfortable basing an argument on the facts and information provided?
# BCC Library Information

## Hours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
<th>Sunday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attleboro</td>
<td>8am – 7:30pm</td>
<td>8am – 7:30pm</td>
<td>8am – 7:30pm</td>
<td>8am – 4:00pm</td>
<td>8:30am – 12:30pm</td>
<td>CLOSED</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall River</td>
<td>7:30am – 9:00pm</td>
<td>7:30am – 9:00pm</td>
<td>7:30am – 9:00pm</td>
<td>7:30am – 6:00pm</td>
<td>10:00am – 6:00pm</td>
<td>10:00am – 6:00pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Bedford</td>
<td>7:30am – 7:30pm</td>
<td>7:30am – 7:30pm</td>
<td>7:30am – 7:30pm</td>
<td>7:30am – 4:00pm</td>
<td>8:30am – 3:00pm</td>
<td>8:30am – 3:00pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taunton</td>
<td>10:00am – 7:00pm</td>
<td>10:00am – 7:00pm</td>
<td>10:00am – 7:00pm</td>
<td>10:00am – 7:00pm</td>
<td>CLOSED</td>
<td>CLOSED</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Locations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campus</th>
<th>Address and Room Number</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BCC Attleboro</td>
<td>Room 107 11 Field Road Attleboro, MA 02703</td>
<td>774.357.3745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCC Fall River</td>
<td>A Building 777 Elsbree St Fall River, MA 02720</td>
<td>774.357.2105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCC New Bedford</td>
<td>NS164 188 Union St New Bedford, MA 02740</td>
<td>774.357.4009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCC Taunton</td>
<td>Room 134 2 Galleria Mall Dr. Silver City Galleria Taunton, MA 02780</td>
<td>774.357.4001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Borrowing Policies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Time Checked Out</th>
<th>Fine if Overdue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book</td>
<td>1 Month</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio Book</td>
<td>2 Weeks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music CD</td>
<td>2 Weeks</td>
<td>$1/day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational DVD/VHS</td>
<td>2 Weeks</td>
<td>$1/day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feature Film DVD/VHS</td>
<td>2 Days</td>
<td>$1/day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Renewals, Overdues, and Lost & Unreturned Items

Renewals are available for most items, and can be completed by calling the library or logging in to the library catalog. While BCC does not charge fines for books, other SAILS library fines may apply for books placed on hold. The borrower will be responsible for replacing any lost or unreturned items. Students who incur $10 or more in fines will have borrowing privileges suspended and transcript holds placed until their library account is settled.