Using Wikipedia (the Scholarly Way)
A Quick Guide to Jump-Starting Your Research Paper

Purpose
The goal of this activity is to ease your fears about using Wikipedia for your college research assignments and to help you learn how to utilize this awesome resource just like the research professionals do. Librarians and professors use Wikipedia all the time, too - we'll show you how to use it strategically to skip ahead quickly on your research work!

What’s Your Topic?
Write your basic research topic idea on the line below.

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Identifying Key Terms and Phrases for Your Topic
One of the best (and easiest!) ways to find essential terms and phrases (keywords) that you can use in your research process is to check the blue hyperlinked words in the Wikipedia entry on your topic. To do this step, find the Wikipedia entry that best fits your topic and find all the blue hyperlinked words that you think relate to your topic. Write them on the lines below.

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What Do You Really Want to Write About?
The best and easiest-to-research topics are generally narrower in scope. These topics will help you find targeted, more specific, and more relevant sources quicker than broad topics. Look at the examples below to see how narrowing a topic can help you find fewer, but MORE relevant results faster! The search results were totaled from the Library’s catalog (the search bar at https://guides.norwich.edu).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Broad Topic</th>
<th>Number of Search Results</th>
<th>Narrower Topic</th>
<th>Number of Search Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Samurai</td>
<td>66,935</td>
<td>Weapons of the samurai</td>
<td>2,489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Astronauts</td>
<td>173,687</td>
<td>The Apollo 11 mission</td>
<td>12,882</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recycling</td>
<td>1,034,722</td>
<td>Plastic waste in our oceans</td>
<td>49,866</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abraham Lincoln</td>
<td>197,019</td>
<td>Abraham Lincoln’s leadership style</td>
<td>4,878</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Easy ways you can narrow your topic down:

- **By location** [focus on a specific country, region, state, city, or type of environment]
- **By demographic** [characteristics [age group, ethnic group, or gender]
- **By timeframe** [do you want to look at your topic during a specific time in history?]

Write a narrower version of your general research topic on the line below.
Work Smarter [and Faster] Without Working Harder -
Using the “References,” “Bibliography,” and “Further Reading” Sections

Did you know that a study found that the scientific articles in Wikipedia came very close to the same level of accuracy and reliability as Encyclopedia Britannica entries? i

Using sources that have been used to cite information in a Wikipedia article can be a fast and easy way to quickly identify potentially useful sources for your own research paper!

Look at the “References,” “Bibliography,” and/or “Further Reading” sections of the Wikipedia page on your topic. Pick the citation that you think could be the MOST helpful for your topic and write it on the lines below.

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Checking for Scholarly Sources in Wikipedia References

An easy way to find scholarly sources on your research topic is to skim the “References,” “Bibliography,” and “Further Reading” sections for the words “University Press.” Any book published by a university press is most likely a scholarly source.

Examples of university presses include (but are not limited to):

- Oxford University Press
- Cambridge University Press
- Princeton University Press
- University of California Press

Skim through all of the citations in your chosen Wikipedia article and record any citations that include “University Press” in the spaces below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Name of University Press</th>
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