**UNDERSTANDING INFORMATION**

**Introduction**

Information is data that is accurate and timely, specific and organized for a purpose, presented within a context that gives it meaning and relevance, and can lead to an increase in understanding and decrease in uncertainty.

Information is valuable because it can affect behavior, a decision, or an outcome. For example, if a manager is told his/her company's net profit decreased in the past month, he/she may use this information as a reason to cut financial spending for the next month.

**FORMATS OF INFORMATION**

Information comes in different formats. No matter what format the information happens to be, it always has to be made accessible to the researcher.

**PRINT MATERIALS**

Information could be in print format such as: books, periodicals e.g journals, maps, bibliographies, indexes and abstracts, photographs, government documents, technical reports, etc.

**Books** are the most common type of printed materials.  The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary defines a book as “*a set of printed pages that are fastened inside a cover so that you can turn them and read them”*.

**Academic journals** contain articles written by subject experts, scientists, or researchers and are a source of **scholarly** information. They will typically examine detailed elements of a subject or address specific topics. The audience for academic journals includes other experts in the field, academics, and students seeking expert knowledge. There is an expectation that the reader has some prior knowledge of the subject, so a journal will often use scientific or technical language. Most undergo a peer-review process to ensure quality, credibility, and accuracy before publication.

**Magazines** entertain and inform a general audience and will frequently discuss current events. Journalists or other professional writers typically author magazine articles rather than subject experts. Magazines will use language that is familiar and understandable to most readers and may offer an opinion or point of view in their coverage.

Similar to magazines**, newspapers** provide information for a wide audience, cover current topics, and are a good source of popular information. In newspapers one will find articles that cover factual events and other articles that are opinion-based like letters to the editor, editorials, and op-eds (“opposite the editorial page”) columns.

**NON-PRINT MATERIALS**

In addition to printed materials, information is also produced in other formats (non-print) including audio, audiovisual, multimedia, microform and electronic books, journals, images, texts/records from the Internet.

**Audio-Visual and Multimedia**

In the past decades, much of the information created by members of a given society is produced in audio, audio-visual and multimedia formats.  Example of audio information is music recorded on CDs and books on audio or video tapes.  Video information includes VCR tapes of TV shows, movies and documentaries.  Other examples are information on CD-ROMs, DVDs, Flash drives and Web documents etc.

**Unpublished sources- Indigenous Knowledge (IK)**

In local communities in Africa, there is a rich body of information or knowledge which has been handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation. This is known as indigenous knowledge. It is neither written nor published but provides people in the community with strategies for survival.  Indigenous knowledge is the sum of knowledge and skills which people in a particular geographical area possess that enables them to get the most out of their natural environment.  This information/knowledge is not systematically documented. It is oral in nature, usually transmitted through personal communication; it is culture-specific and often generated within communities for local level decision-making in agriculture, healthcare, food preparation, education, natural resources management and other activities.  Examples of areas where indigenous knowledge has been very useful include African traditional medicine, conflict resolution and culture - dance steps and traditional attire.

**Electronic format**

Websites are the leading form of electronic information available, and many websites incorporate some form of multimedia presentation. Virtually any information retrieved in a Google search comes from a website. While most publication, material, and format types are accessible online, the quality, coverage, and purpose of these sources will vary significantly. There is a lot of great information online but because of the wide range of sources, it is increasingly important to scrutinize the information you find on websites.

**Characteristics of Information**

Five characteristics of high-quality information are accuracy, completeness, consistency, uniqueness, and timeliness.

**Barriers to Information Use**

The reasons why people do not use information are many and complex. Laura Brick (1999) conducted a study of the non-use of information that was available in a workplace business library. She found that non-users were unaware of the information that was available to them, that they tended to delegate information searching to subordinates (who may or may not use the library), and that they were not information conscious (i.e., they did not see the need to obtain information for their daily tasks and decisions).

Many personal barriers to information use have also been identified. Among these are

* Not knowing what information is needed or available (i.e., people do not know what they do not know).
* People may not know what question to ask (e.g., a person may lack the necessary mental model or context of a problem to know how to articulate a request for help).
* People often do not know where to look (i.e., a person may have a question or problem but not know where to turn for help).
* People often do not know that sources exist (e.g., many people are pleasantly surprised by the availability of useful information in public libraries). The information needed may not exist (e.g., somebody may need a particular aggregate of data in order to make a decision, but that data has never been collected).
* A person may lack communication skills (e.g., a person may not have the language skills required to ask for help, or a person may display unusual social behavior that gets in the way of communication).
* A person may lack confidence or ability (e.g., government information available only through online kiosks will be inaccessible to people who lack the confidence or the technical skills to use computers).
* People may be discouraged by sources that they approach (e.g., they may encounter frustrating delays in getting the help they need, and simply give up, or they may receive inaccurate or inappropriate information).
* Finally, a common barrier is information scatter, which is confronted particularly in the case of complex information needs (when needed information is available only by using several different sources).

**INTRODUCTION TO INFORMATION LITERACY**

**What is information literacy?**

According to Thomas (2004), information literacy may be understood to be as the body of knowledge, skills, competencies and understanding required by an individual to find information effectively and use it appropriately to meet the need that prompted its acquisition.

The Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL) defines information literacy as "the set of skills needed to find, retrieve, analyze, and use information." ACRL has defined five **standards** for Information Literacy.

In sum, information literacy therefore, is the knowledge of when and why you need information, where to find it, and how to evaluate, use and communicate it in an ethical manner.

The goals of acquiring information literacy skills are listed below:

* Communities enjoy a high quality of life because leaders make good decisions based on sound information.
* Workers have the skills and competencies they need to work effectively in a complex information environment.
* Students graduate with the skills and competencies they need to succeed in the world of work.
* People of all ages and backgrounds have the resources and skills they need to fully participate in democracies.
* Libraries of all types receive increased support as cultural and dynamic centres for information literacy and lifelong learning.
* Librarians are recognised as information experts and key players in the education process who teach others how to navigate a rich and complex, evolving information/technology environment.

**Standard 1: To know (locating information)**

The information literate student determines the nature and extent of the information needed.

The student must be able to identify these questions:

* What is it you want to know?
* What kind of information do you need?
* How much information do you need?

**Standard 2: To access (analyzing information)**

The information literate student accesses needed information effectively and efficiently.

The student must be able to identify these questions:

* What is the best way to gather this information?
* Am I using the best terms for this search?
* Which search system or other resource will get me this information?

**Standard 3: To evaluate**

The information literate student evaluates information and its sources critically and incorporates selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system.

The student must be able to identify these questions:

* Is this a credible source of information?
* Is there another interpretation or point of view?
* How does this new information change what I know?

**Evaluating Information Sources/Results of Searches**

When you are gathering information, whether it is from books, journals, the Internet, etc., you will need to know whether it is good information. There are many questions you should ask yourself as you decide whether a particular source is good for your research. It is also important to note that the means by which you search for information does not produce misleading or incomplete results. These concern the authority, relevance, coverage, accuracy, currency, quality and context of the material.

Authority and Credibility:

* Who is the publisher?
* Who is (are) the author(s)?
* What makes the author an authority on this subject?
* Does the author cite his/her experience/credentials?
* Does the book or article contain footnotes?
* If so, does material taken from other sources appear to be fully credited?

Scope and Relevance:

* Who is the intended audience? (General, specialized, scholars, etc.)
* What is the level of the material? (Basic, advanced, for geniuses only, etc.)
* Is the material appropriate and useful for your purposes?

Coverage:

* What time period is covered?
* What geographical area is covered?
* How comprehensive and specific is the information?

Bias and Accuracy:

* How is the information presented? (Fact, opinion, propaganda, etc.)
* If presented as fact, is it accurate?
* Is there a bias? (Cultural, political, religious, etc.)
* If so, is the bias clearly stated?

Currency and Timeliness:

* How recent is the book or article?
* How important is this to you and your topic?

Quality:

* What was the quality of the research methodology?
* Did it use accepted methodologies for its field, as far as you know?
* What is the validity
* Is the article clearly written and well-organized?

Context:

* How does the book or article fit into its discipline discourse?
* Is new research being reported or is the author reviewing previously conducted research?
* Does the author agree or disagree with the majority of other scholars in the discipline?
* Is this the first article of its kind within its discipline?
* When you start research on a topic you generally begin with some broad ideas and then refine and focus the search as you begin to gather information. Keep a record of what you find and where you found it because not only will you need it for your project's bibliography, but you may need to re-visit some of the sources as you focus your search.
* There are several steps to this process: identify the topic; gather information; focus the research. You'll probably have to take the steps over and over a few times. As you proceed, you'll formulate a focused research question. That's the question you'll be answering in your paper.
* Another way to approach a topic is to create a 'concept map' - a brainstorming technique that helps organize a research problem. From there a search strategy can be developed to assist in finding information.

**Standard 4: To use (organization of information)**

The information literate student, individually or as a member of a group, uses information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose.

The student must be able to identify these questions:

* What is the best method for presenting this information?
* Will this image convey the message I want?
* Are these quotes supportive of my ideas?

**Standard 5: Ethical/Legal**

The information literate student understands many of the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information and accesses and uses information ethically and legally.

The student must be able to identify these questions:

* Can I make a copy of this material?
* What are the issues surrounding censorship?
* Are there policies about information gathering, use or reproduction and dissemination?

In order to retrieve the information you need, it is really important to know how the information is organized. Organisation provides access to information or a collection. Libraries use organisation schemes to 'classify' information according to the academic discipline or area of knowledge (class) the information fits into. The Library of Congress (LC) has developed a system that is used by most academic libraries. Being familiar with the LC system will help you find material in the catalogues of an academic library.

**Ethical and Responsible Use of Information**

It is important to note that the information so acquired should be used in a responsible, culturally sensitive and ethical manner. This means that anytime you use somebody’s work you have to acknowledge the author. Here, the issues include intellectual property, plagiarism, copyright, fair use, freedom of information, data protection among others. Students have to be prepared to be accountable users and producers of information. Therefore, assignments and project works they undertake must clearly demonstrate their own thinking and not just a conglomeration of “cut and paste” phrases conveniently borrowed and meshed together from numerous sources and of doubtful quality and content.

**The Importance of Information Literacy**

Information literacy is important owing to the amount of information that is available in contemporary society. Simply being exposed to a great deal of information will not make people informed citizens; they need to learn how to use this information effectively, (ACRL, 2000).

Information literacy is very important because we are inundated with a lot of information in a variety of formats. The same credibility can however, not be attached to all this information. While some may be authoritative, current and reliable, others may be biased, out-of-date, false and misleading. With the advent of information and communication technologies, the amount of information that is being generated is assuming alarming proportions. Therefore, the types of technologies required to access, manipulate and create information will definitely increase.

The definition of an information-literate person extends beyond school and application to academic problems such as writing a research paper and reaches right into the workplace. Information literacy is also important to an effective and enlightened citizenry and has implications that can impact the lives of many people around the globe. The ability to use information technologies effectively to find and manage information, and the ability to critically evaluate and ethically apply that information to solve a problem are some of the hallmarks of an information literate individual. Other characteristics of an information literate individual include the spirit of inquiry and perseverance to find out what is necessary to get a job done.

**Organization and use of information**

"Information use" is concerned with understanding what information sources people choose and the ways in which people apply information to make sense of their lives and situations. This use can be instrumental (e.g., when a decision-maker uses financial data to inform a budget decision), or it can be affective, influencing how people feel (e.g., a person may use information gathered during a conversation with a friend to feel more motivated or better satisfied about a career choice).

The reasons for why people create information may not be the same as the reasons for why people use information. Information is interpreted and used differently (and often in unintended ways) by different individuals and groups. For example, the information that is provided in a radio broadcast may, in the view of the show's producer, have the primary purpose of influencing voters' decisions. However, that information may be used in an unanticipated or unwanted way; it may be used as a source of humorous commentary by a comedian, or it may be used as fodder for an alternative political viewpoint. The uses to which people put information depend on such factors as their existing knowledge, their affective state (i.e., mood and motivation), their intellectual abilities, and their existing skills (e.g., literacy) or physical disabilities.

**INFORMATION SOURCES**

An **information source** is a person, thing, or place from which [information](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information) comes, arises, or is obtained. Information sources can be primary or secondary. That source might then inform a person about something or provide knowledge about it. Information sources are divided into separate distinct categories, [primary](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Primary_source), [secondary](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secondary_source), [tertiary](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tertiary_source).

**Different types of Information Sources in Library**

Generally, information sources are classified into three types depending on the information available from the resource.

**Primary Sources of Information:** Primary sources are original materials. They are from the time period involved and have not been filtered through interpretation or evaluation. Primary sources are original materials on which other research is based. They are usually the first formal appearance of results in physical, print or electronic format. They present original thinking, report a discovery, or share new information. The definition of a primary source may vary depending upon the discipline or context.

Some primary resources are given below:

* Artifacts (e.g. coins, plant specimens, fossils, furniture, tools, clothing, all from the time under study);
* Audio recordings (e.g. radio programs)
* Diaries;
* Internet communications on email, list serves;
* Interviews (e.g., oral histories, telephone, e-mail);
* Journal articles published in peer-reviewed publications;
* Letters;
* Newspaper articles written at the time;
* Original Documents (i.e. birth certificate, will, marriage license, trial transcript);
* Patents;
* Photographs;
* Proceedings of Meetings, conferences and symposia;
* Records of organizations, government agencies (e.g. annual report, treaty, constitution, government document);
* Speeches;
* Survey Research (e.g., market surveys, public opinion polls);
* Video recordings (e.g. television programs);
* Works of art, architecture, literature, and music (e.g., paintings, sculptures, musical scores, buildings, novels, poems).
* Web site.

**Secondary Sources of Information:** Secondary sources are less easily defined than primary sources. Generally, they are accounts written after the fact with the benefit of hindsight. They are interpretations and evaluations of primary sources. Some Secondary resources are given below:

* Bibliographies (also considered tertiary);
* Biographical works;
* Commentaries, criticisms;
* Dictionaries, Encyclopedias (also considered tertiary);
* Histories;
* Journal articles (depending on the discipline can be primary);
* Magazine and newspaper articles (this distinction varies by discipline);
* Monographs, other than fiction and autobiography;
* Textbooks (also considered tertiary);
* Web site (also considered primary).

**Tertiary Sources of information:** Tertiary sources consist of information which is a distillation and collection of primary and secondary sources.

Some Tertiary resources are given below:

* Bibliography of Bibliographies;
* Almanacs;
* Bibliographies (also considered secondary);
* Chronologies;
* Dictionaries and Encyclopedias (also considered secondary);
* Directories;
* Fact books;
* Guide books;
* Indexes, abstracts, bibliographies used to locate primary and secondary sources;
* Manuals;
* Textbooks (also be secondary

**Dictionaries**

A dictionary is defined as a reference book or a set of books containing words and usually phrases, alphabetically arranged, together with information about them, especially their forms, pronunciations, usage, spelling and meaning. In addition, the dictionary may give etymology, synonyms, antonyms, biographical facts and geographical information or gazette.

**Uses of Dictionaries**

Dictionaries are used to define words, to verify spelling, syllabication or pronunciation; to check on usage; or to determine the etymology of a word. To some extent, they also standardize the language based on current usage.

**Encyclopedias**

Reitz (2013) defines an encyclopedia “as a book or numbered set of books containing authoritative summary of information about a variety of topics in the form of short essays, usually arranged alphabetically by headword or classified in some manner”.

The content of an encyclopedia usually gives an overview of a topic including definition, description, background and bibliographical references. The most important of reference books are probably encyclopedias as they contain information about places, events, people and things, including facts and figures.

**Uses of Encyclopedias**

* Finding facts;
* Provide general background or historical information;
* Locate explanatory material or definitions;
* Serve as guides to related topics within its pages or to outside sources of information (cross references and bibliographies);
* Teach research skills, that is, a systematic approach to gathering information.

Like dictionaries, all the above publications may be in single or multiple volumes.

**Directories**

Reitz (2013) describes a directory as a list of people, companies, institutions, organizations, etc., in alphabetical or classified order providing contact information (names, addresses -physical, postal, e-mail, website-, phone and fax numbers) and other pertinent details (functions, affiliations and membership of associations, conferences, publications, etc.)

**Uses of Directories**

Directories are used to locate organizations, institutions and people. They are also used to verify the name of an organization or the spelling of a person’s name. Directories, like bibliographies and other databases are to enable users make the best use of and provide access to information about people, organizations, institutions as well as publications.

**Bibliographies**

The word bibliography comes from the Greek word *bibliographia* meaning book writing. A bibliography is the name given to a list of books, manuscripts and other publications systematically arranged and described and which have some relationship to each other.

**Uses of Bibliographies**

* Bibliographies are useful sources in searching for materials/publications on a subject or person/author. That is, they can be used to locate materials on the subject in question or about the number of publications emanating from an author;
* They provide a means to verify the details of publications;
* They indicate the scope of the subject;
* The bibliographies found in articles and books provide further information for users to investigate their areas of research and study.

**Biographies**

A biography is the story of a person’s life written by someone else. Biographic reference sources are special reference sources that provide information about individuals whether dead or alive. The basic information in biographical reference materials include the name of a person, date and place of birth, background (family, country, educational, professional, etc.), and his or her role in society.

**Uses of Biographies**

* Find information about a person;
* Locate people who are famous in a given country, occupation, career or profession;
* Provide useful historical information and therefore enriches history;
* Prepare towards introducing a guest speaker (if it is current).

**Maps and Atlases**

A simple definition of a map is a representation of the surface of the earth or a section of it. An atlas is a bound collection of maps, and may include charts, plates or tables, illustrating any subject. There are various types of maps including, topographical, political, road, economic/resource, and climatic in various formats (printed or electronic) used for different purposes and information needs. Maps are usually stored flat in special cabinets and require large surface areas to be used. They are therefore likely to be kept separately.

Traditionally, **atlases** could be defined as collections of maps of uniform dimension bound together in a single volume or volumes. They may also be found in loose leaf format or be available electronically. Atlases may be the work of individuals, publishers (Philip’s, Times or Oxford) or learned organisations (eg. National Geographic Society)

**Uses of Atlases**

* Locate places on the earth’s surface;
* Determine the distance between two points;
* Determine the time zones of cities and countries for decision-making.

**Gazetteers**

The gazetteer is an alphabetical arrangement of place names, including both natural and man-made features and is often used alongside maps and atlases. The word *gazetteer* was originally used to describe a writer for a gazette (an official newspaper report). Gazetteers may be found in the last pages of an atlas and give some reference to the location of the features and other additional information of places listed/mentioned. They may be considered as the index of the atlas.

**Uses of Gazetteers**

* Locate places;
* Check the approved names and places;
* Check the correct spelling of place names.

**Travel Guides**

They are documents meant to provide information to the traveler about a place of interest. The increase in tourism activities has generated an unprecedented proliferation of travel literature, both domestic and international. The Ghana Tourism Authority has published a number of travel guides (eg. *Ghana Today*) which list and describe the hotels, restaurants, tourist centers (such as game reserves, forts, museums and castles, and waterfalls) in the country.

**Periodicals**

A periodical is a serial publication with a distinctive title and which appears at regular or irregular intervals, generally more than once per year, without prior decision as to when the last issue will appear. They have assumed greater importance due to their advantage of timeliness over books. Each issue of a periodical is complete in itself but its relationship to preceding issues is indicated by enumeration. Usually each issue bears a volume, issue number and/or date (eg. *Ghana Library Journal* 21(2), 2009); *The Mirror*, 3058, 17th August, 2013; *African Research & Documentation* 115, 2011.

Periodicals usually contain articles (which may be general or scholarly), stories, photographs, data, advertisements, or writings by several contributors. They include **journals, magazines, reports, newsletters** and **bulletins** whose contents are controlled by an editor or editorial board. These publications have International Standard Serial Numbers (ISSN) made up of eight digits which are unique to them. The frequency of periodicals may range from

**Indexes**

An **index** indicates where information can be found rather than provide the information. In other words, an index is a Control-Access-Directional publication, which serves as guide to the contents of a document. Indexes include bibliographies of currently published materials, usually of articles in periodicals, materials appearing in newspapers and literature appearing in collections or anthologies.

The information supplied by indexing publications include the author, the subject of the article or report, the title of the periodical, volume number, date of publication etc. without any added comment(s). An example is back of book Index – It is found at the back of books and they are used to find certain topics or words discussed within the text. It could be author indexed or subject indexed or both.

**Abstracts**

Abstracts give full bibliographic details as in the case of indexes and in addition present a brief summary of the subject content of the article or report indexed. Abstracts serve as an aid in assessing the content of a document and its potential relevance. There are several published scholarly indexing and abstracting journals. These are usually located at the Periodicals Section of Libraries (especially academic and special).

**Uses of Indexes and Abstracts**

* For the selection and acquisition of library materials;
* They serve as aids for readers to evaluate the content of a document;
* They are used to facilitate retrieval of information by reducing the time users spend in locating information;
* They are used for compilation and production of a bibliography;
* They are tools used to identify articles in journals;
* They are also very important tools for researchers to know what materials have been published in their subject of interest.

**INFORMATION RETRIEVAL**

**Information retrieval** (**IR**) is the activity of obtaining [information system](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_system) resources relevant to an information need from a collection of information resources. Searches can be based on [full-text](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Full-text_search) or other content-based indexing. Information retrieval is the science of searching for information in a document, searching for documents themselves, and also searching for [metadata](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metadata) that describe data, and for databases of texts, images or sounds.

**Understanding the basic organisation of libraries**

**Introduction**

People acquire education through certain institutions like schools, churches, welfare bodies, associations and organizations, and the library is the most outstanding of such institutions. A library may be defined as a building or a series of rooms containing collections of records of human culture in diverse formats and languages, preserved, organized and interpreted to meet broad and varying needs of individuals for information, knowledge, recreation and aesthetic enjoyment (Alemna, 2000).

Aina (2004) sees libraries as institutions responsible for the collection, processing and storage of recorded knowledge for the purpose of reading, study and consultation.

Librarians therefore acquire, catalogue, classify and arrange the library materials in such a way as to facilitate easy retrieval.

**Types of Libraries**

**School Libraries**

A school library can be defined as the library within a pre-tertiary institution where pupils/students and staff of a public or private school have access to a variety of resources. Morris as quoted in Wikipedia also asserted that a school library serves as the center and coordinating agency for all materials used in the school (http://en.wikipedia.org.wiki/school\_library, 25th July, 2013). The main function of the school library is to support the various educational programs at the various levels. The school library exists to provide a range of learning opportunities for both large and small groups as well as individuals with focus on intellectual content, information literacy, and the learner (Morris, 2004).

**Academic Libraries**

An academic library is also known as a college or university library. It serves the curricular needs of students, faculty and staff of the parent institution (ie. post-secondary institution). In other words, its users are the academic staff (lecturers), researchers, students (both under graduate and post-graduate) and administrative staff.

**Special Libraries**

This type of library is found in government institutions, industrial, research, commercial and business organisations to provide for the information needs of their staff. The overriding requirement of the special library is the provision of information that enables research workers and other employees to carry out their company duties affectively.

**Public Libraries**

Public libraries by their nature are the most familiar and visible type of library to most people. A public library is a library that has been set up to provide service to all members of the community regardless of age, citizenship, occupation, economic status, educational level etc. Public libraries are funded by government and are sited in cities, towns or villages so that users can have easy access to their facilities. Public libraries are distinct from research libraries, school libraries and other special libraries in that their mandate is to serve the general public’s information needs. Community, municipal and district libraries are all examples of a public library.

Ghana’s first attempt at providing public library service was in 1928 by Reverend John Anglioby, an Anglican Bishop in Accra. In 1950, the Ghana Library Board (now the Ghana Library Authority) was established and mandated to establish, equip, manage and maintain all public libraries in the country. There are ten regional libraries and several municipal, community and district libraries that are supervised by the Ghana Library Authority.

**National Library**

A national library is a library specifically established by the government of a country to serve as an outstanding repository of information for that country. A national library is usually the largest and the most comprehensive library in its coverage of information about a country.

The main goal of a national library is to ensure the bibliographic control of all books and other materials published in that particular country and about that country.

**FORMS OF LIBRARIES**

**Traditional Library**

In a traditional library, most of its operations (activities) are done manually and without the aid of computer technology. In addition, almost all the library’s resources are in print format. Non-print materials (audio-visual materials such as audio and video tapes, microform) are accessed with the appropriate machines.

**Advantages of Traditional Libraries**

The following are some of the advantages:

* Stable collection;
* Free and universal access to the collection;
* Can be used without electricity;
* Documents can easily be photocopied;
* No computer expertise is required on the part of the library staff and users.

**Disadvantages of Traditional Libraries**

The following are some of the disadvantages:

* Limited access to materials;
* Centralized management of the resources;
* Users are limited by physical location;
* Content of materials are not directly linked with each other;
* Slow update of collection.

**Electronic/Digital Library**

A digital library has all information resources in digital form and access to such resources is through the use of digital technologies. It is therefore a library in which collections are stored in digital formats (as opposed to print, microform, or other media) and accessible by computers.

Electronic devices such as digital cameras and scanners are used to digitize printed specific library collections. Such materials are made-digital. Other materials are born-digital in that they were made with computer technology and need not be converted into digital format. Digital libraries can be accessed on the internet.

To be considered as a digital library, an on-line collection of information must be managed and made accessible to a community of users. The digital content can be stored locally or remotely and can be accessed via computer networks.

**Advantages of Digital Libraries**

The following are some of the advantages:

* They allow users to directly access and use the documents information they have found;
* Access to information is quicker because of the use of computers and a network of computers. They allow users to quickly find documents by using a computer and a network;
* Information can be accessed anywhere and at any time (there are no closing hours) since one does not need to be physically present in the holding library. ;
* Digital library collections can be delivered on CD-ROM and other external storage devices to users with inadequate network connectivity;
* A digital library can provide access to content in different and more appealing forms including animation, graphical, audio and video formats;
* Information is more easily shared with other digital libraries. There is therefore enhanced access to users.

**Disadvantages of Digital Libraries**

The following are some of the disadvantages:

* The content of some of the documents may not be well screened and validated;
* Difficulty of knowing and locating everything that is available and differentiating valuable from useless information if one is not computer literate;
* Job loss for traditional publishers;
* It cannot be used when there is no electricity and inadequate bandwidth;
* It is more expensive to set up and manage.

**Hybrid Library**

The hybrid library has its information resources in both print and non-print formats. It also means that some of its operations or services (such as acquisitions, cataloguing and circulation) are performed with the aid of computer technology. This implies that the users of a hybrid library have access to physical collections as well as digital collections (electronic resources) like full text on-line journals, e-books, audio books and full text databases on CD - ROM etc. In such libraries for example, online public access catalogues (OPACs) are used to access the libraries’ collections. All the features of the traditional library may be present in the hybrid library.

**Advantage of Hybrid Libraries**

The main advantage of this form of library is that information can be accessed in both print and non- print formats. It harnesses the advantages of both the traditional and digital libraries.

**Catalogue card**

A library catalogue is a list of documents in a library, with the entries representing the documents arranged in some systematic order. It provides data about items in the collection which the cataloguers represent. The library catalogue carries information on where the items can be found. Almost all library catalogues are multiple access files. Multiple access files are entry points or ways to get to an item and retrieve that record.

**Classification**

**The Meaning of Classification**

**Library classification** is a [system](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/System) of [knowledge organization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knowledge_organization) by which library resources are arranged according to subject. Library classifications use a notational system that represents the order of topics in the classification and allows items to be stored in that order. Library classification systems group related materials together, typically arranged in a hierarchical tree structure.

**The Library of Congress Classification Scheme (LC)**

The LC is basically a classification by discipline and consists of 21 main classes. The structure is as follows:

* Class A- General Works and Polygraphy
* Class B to P- Humanities and Social Sciences (e.g. English for Nurses - English)
* Class Q to V – Science and Technology (e. g. Statistics for Engineers - Statistics)
* Class Z – Librarianship and Bibliography

**Outline of the Main Classes**

* A - General Works
* B – Philosophy, Psychology, Religion
* C - Auxiliary Sciences of History
* D - History: General and Old World (EH)
* E-F - History: America (Western Hemisphere)
* G - Geography. Maps. Anthropology. Recreation
* H - Social Sciences
* J – Political Science
* K – Law (General)
* L - Education
* M - Music
* N – Fine Art
* P- Languages and Literature
* Q- Science
* R - Medicine
* S - Agriculture
* T - Technology
* U - Military Science
* V - Naval Science
* Z - Bibliography. Library Science

**INFORMATION RETRIEVAL (ELECTRONIC PROVISION)**

**Internet**

The Internet, also called the Net, is simply defined as a global network of computer networks. It is a large computer network that has connections to a vast number of computers all around the world that links millions of businesses, government agencies, educational institutions, and individuals

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**Uses of the Internet**

There are several uses or advantages of the Internet. It is widely used by many to meet different needs. The popularity of the Internet has contributed, in most part, to the development of society. People are nowadays becoming more reliant on the Internet for their day to day work to save time and cost. When we summarize the usage of the Internet there are some common uses too. These are:

* Communication
* Information Dissemination
* Education and Research
* Entertainment
* Online Services
* E-Commerce

**Misuses of the Internet**

As much as there are enormous advantages in using the Internet, there are also some disadvantages associated with its usage. Some of these are:

* Pornography
* Identity Theft/Fraud
* Spamming
* Computer Virus Threat

**Engines for research**

A search engine is an information retrieval system designed to help find information stored on a computer system (often the World Wide Web). Search engines are made up of programs ("spiders" or "robots") to collect information; to index this information; and create databases of web sites visited which are regularly updated. They have search interface. Some examples are www.google.com,www.bing.com,www.msn.com,www.alltheweb.com, and www.ask.com. Search engines help in locating information for which you do not know the exact web address. They require that you enter a word or phrase, called search text or search query, which describes the item you want to find. Each word in the search text is known as a keyword. Your search query can be broad or more specific. The search engines often respond with thousands or millions of results, whose content varies depending on the type of information you are looking for. Some results have links to Web pages or articles; other results may be images or videos.

**Metasearch/ Multi-search Engines**

Metasearch engines query several search engines at the same time and combine their results. For example, www.yippy.com generates an ordered list based on comparative ranking. This "metasearch" approach helps raise the best results to the top and push search engine spam to the bottom. Meta search engines permit users to enter search query once and access several search engines simultaneously. Meta search engines operate on the premise that, the Web is too large for any one search engine to index it all, and that more comprehensive search results can be obtained by combining the results from several search engines. This also saves the user’s time from having to use multiple search engines separately. While some metasearch engines like [www.webcrawler](http://www.webcrawler).com and www.metacrawler.com query two or three search engines at the same time, others like www.ixquick.com queries over ten different search engines simultaneously. Also, some metasearch engines such as www.dogpile.com do show the search engines where the results are picked from whereas others like www.mamma.com do not do that.

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**Why Effective Searching?**

There are several reasons for which one must carry out an effective search on the Internet. Some reasons may include:

* There are a huge amount of resources online. For instance, Google claims to have indexed more than 8 billion web pages (Gulli and Signorini, 2005).
* The World Wide Web is not indexed or catalogued; hence we need to formulate our searches carefully.
* We need to make effective use of resources such as computers, bandwidth, time and money. According to Shelly and Vermaat (2011), sharing resources on a network saves time and money.

**Electronic resources (simple and advanced search)**

You can choose to run a Simple Search or an Advanced Search at any time.

* **Simple Search** lets you quickly enter search terms and see a broad list of results. A simple search looks for any match in an item's Title, Author, Keyword, Subject, Description, Publisher, Date, ISBN, Call Number, and more.
* **Advanced Search** lets you specify more options for your search and gives you more control over the results that you see. You can select specific fields like Author, Title, or Call Number, and you can select a specific Material Type (format) or Publication Date.

Searching the World Wide Web can be an overwhelming task. One must however know the basic steps in order to search effectively. To effectively retrieve information from the Internet, one can employ the following steps:

1. Define your information need
2. Choose your search terms
3. Decide which sources/search tool to use
4. Find out how the search tool functions
5. Run your search
6. Review and refine your search

Note: Steps 1-3 can be done offline or away from a computer connected to the Internet.

1. Define Your Information Need

* What sort of information are you looking for?

– Is it specific information? eg. fact or date;

* Reference source, e.g. data book, encyclopaedia, dictionary, the Web or even a textbook could be the best source.
* General information, eg. research topics which may require more thought, including how much information is needed and at what depth
* Who is going to use the information?

– Researcher? First year student?

* This might affect the sort of information you require

2. Choose Your Search Terms

* What unique words do you think will appear in the site/article you want?
* Are there any key phrases?
* Are there any synonyms, alternative spellings, plurals or capitals that you need to consider
* What broader topic is it a part of or related to?

Example: I want to find information about the health implications of water pollution

* Keywords–’water’ ‘pollution’ ‘health’
* Broader topics–‘environmental degradation’ or ‘agricultural management’ or ‘health’
* Synonyms:

– Water: rivers, lakes, sea, coastal, ‘domestic water’, etc

3. Decide the Sources/ Search Tool to Use

* What sources or search tool are appropriate for your information need?

– Search engines, Subject gateways, academic databases, etc.

– Reference resources, e.g., encyclopaedias, dictionaries

– Individuals’ and organisations’ home pages

– Newspapers, etc.

4. Find out How the Search Tool Functions

All electronic search tools function slightly differently and may use some of the following functions:

* Phrase searching: Allow you to search for an exact phrase, and it is used for performing simple searches.
* Boolean operators: using AND, OR, NOT in performing advance searches
* Truncation/wildcards: allows you to retrieve documents containing variations on a search term. To do this, type the first few letters (stem) of the keyword followed by an asterisk (\*). For example, creat\* would retrieve entries for all documents containing the words: creature, creation, create, creating, creator, etc.
* Case sensitivity: recognition of upper or lower cases in search terms
* Fields: searches in fields such as the title, URL or links
* Stop words: searches may ignore terms such as: and, if, an, the

Boolean searching is the conventional basis for searching most computerized systems, including bibliographic databases. Most search engines allow you to combine terms with words referred to as Boolean operators such as "and," "or," or "not." Knowing how to use these terms is very important for a successful search. Most search engines will allow you to apply the Boolean operators in an "advanced search" option.

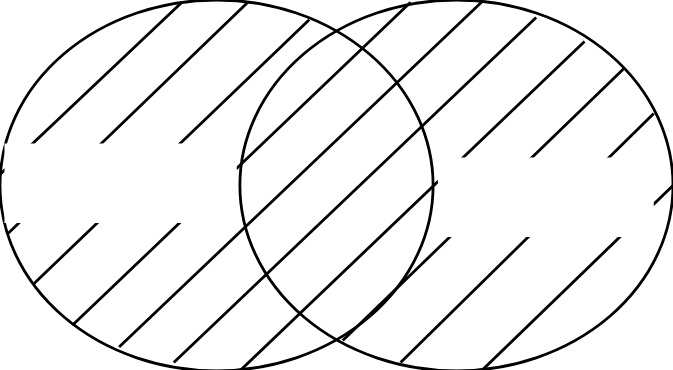
* Uses commands (operators) such as AND, OR, NOT
* Different search tools may use different symbols

AND (+)

NOT (–)

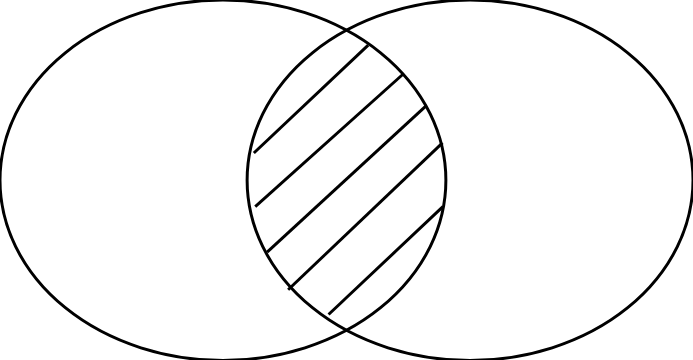
* Different search tools may use OR or AND as a default setting
* Sometimes Boolean operators must be entered in capital letters

**OR** is an operator that allows either word to be present in each record in the results. You use OR operator to expand your search. For example, to enter a search query ‘Education OR Literacy’ means you want the search tool to provide results on either of the two keywords. Hence, the results provided will cover information from websites which contain the word education only or literacy only or both education and literacy. The Venn diagram below illustrates the function of the OR operator by shading all sections of the circles.



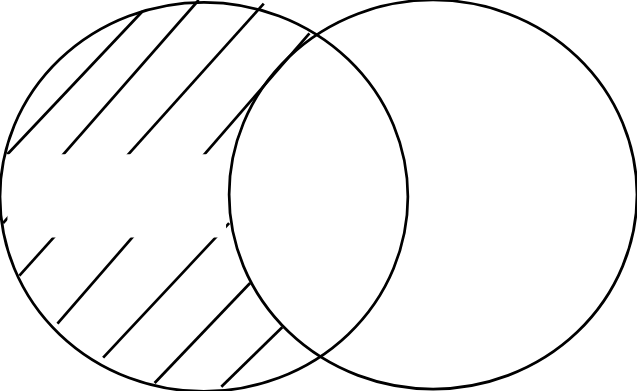
Query: I would like information on education or literacy.

**AND** is an operator that requires both words to be present in each record in the results. You use AND operator to narrow your search. For example, to enter a search query like ‘Education AND Literacy’ means you want the search tool to provide results on both keywords. Therefore, the results displayed will cover information from websites or articles which contain both education and literacy, ignoring any information on only education or only literacy. The Venn diagram below illustrates the function of the AND operator by shading the intersection of the circles.



Query: I am interested in the relationship between education and literacy

**NOT** is a connector that requires the first word to be present in each record in the results, however, it excludes the second word. For example, to enter a search query on ‘Education NOT Secondary’ means you want the search tool to display results on only the first word, which is education and ignore all sites or articles which have either the word secondry or both education and secondary in them. The shaded part in the Venn diagram below demonstrates how the NOT operator works.



Query: I want to see information about education, but I want to avoid seeing anything about secondary.

Note: In some databases, the expressions “Must contain” or “all of these words” implies the operator AND, whereas “Any of the words” implies the operator OR.

5. Running the Search

* Take the terms/keywords you have decided on and enter them in the search bar of the search tool.
* Run the search by clicking on the search button.
* Search results will be displayed with hyperlinks after the search. Hyperlinks are connections to other documents or web pages that contain related information. They appear as underlined or coloured words and phrases.

6. Review and Revise Your Search

* The information or results displayed must be evaluated for quality and authenticity
* The search scope (query) and approach can be revised
* Try new sources of information

**Electronic resources and formats**

The World Wide Web has various types of information available online for downloads. These include:

* Publications - grey literature eg. Public sector publications, news articles and magazines
* Web documents - Individuals’ and organisations’ home pages
* Online journals – electronic journals
* Online books – electronic books
* Reference resources - dictionaries, encyclopaedias, etc.
* Images -pictures, diagrams, and drawings
* Videos –documentaries, home or movie videos, music videos, and television programs
* Audio - music, audio recordings and sounds
* Maps - maps of countries or cities, weather maps, and driving directions to a destination
* People or Business directories - addresses and telephone numbers
* Blogs - specific opinions and ideas of others

**Internet Search Tools**

Searching for information on the Internet can be an exciting experience if one knows how and which tools to use. There are various resources which can be used to search or retrieve information for academic or research purposes. Most search tools vary slightly in how they function and what information is included in their database. The four most widely used search tools are the Search engines, Meta search engine, Web Directories/ Portal (Subject Gateways) and Databases:

**Databases**

A database is simply a collection of structured records. It is structured in such a way to permit orderly retrieval for research, study or administration. A database record contains defined fields. Shelly and Vermaat (2011) defined a database as a collection of data organized in a manner that allows access, retrieval, and use of that data.

**Types of Databases**

Databases can be categorized as follows:

* Bibliographic Database: It is a database of bibliographic records, an organized digital collection of references to published literature, including journal and newspaper articles, conference proceedings, reports, government and legal publications, patents, books, etc. A bibliographic database may be general in scope or cover a specific academic discipline.
* (eg. MEDLINE, AIDSLINE, HealthSTAR)
* Full-text Databases: These contain the full text of a work and not the abstract only, which are presented right on the screen.
* Numeric Databases: These provide mostly numeric data such as statistics, financial data, census information, and economic indicators (eg. www.technet.microsoft.com)
* Image Databases: These are databases which contain graphics (eg. www.flickr.com, Google images, etc)
* Audio Databases: These are databases which only contain collections of audio data (eg. www.spotify.com)
* Video Databases: These are databases which only contain collections of video data (eg. www.youtube.com)
* Mixed Databases: These are databases which contain a mixture of information in text, graphic and audio/video (eg. www.google.com)

**Academic Databases**

Academic database is a universal index of periodical literature covering basic research from all fields of knowledge. They contain records with defined fields such as title, author, date, URL, etc. Academic Journals Database contains complete bibliographic citations, precise indexing, and informative abstracts for papers from a wide range of periodicals. Some academic databases are free to use while some may require subscription to access its content. Some examples are Highwire, JSTOR, SAGE, PubMed, Hinari, Agora, OARE, Science Direct, Emerald, and Ebsco. Academic databases provide high quality information as their contents have been evaluated or peer reviewed, thereby providing scholarly journal articles.

**CITATION AND REFERENCING / PLAGIARISM & COPYRIGHT**

When you are writing a piece of work and use someone else's words or ideas **you must reference them.**

This means that you need to include detailed information on all sources consulted, both within your text (in-text citations) and at the end of your work (reference list or bibliography).

Another way to understand referencing is to think of an analogy - when you buy designer clothes there is usually a label attached to say who made them; this brand identity is like an author of a book.

Why is referencing important?

* It is crucial to successful research.
* Helps the reader to find the original source if they wish.
* Improves your writing skills
* Adds authenticity to your argument.
* Shows that you have read widely.
* Can help you get better marks

Citation is a way of acknowledging sources of certain materials in your work. In other words it is

a directional sign or postal address to sources we used in our work.

Proper citation is a key element in academic and intellectual exchange.

Proper citation basically does the following:

* Shows respect for the work of others
* Helps a reader(s) to distinguish our work from the works of others who have contributed to our work.

**Citation Styles**

All fields of research agree on the need to document scholarly borrowings, but documentation conventions vary because of the different needs of scholarly disciplines. The most common citation styles are the American Psychological Association (APA) and Modern Languages Association (MLA). APA style for documentation is most commonly used to cite sources in social sciences while MLA is widely used in the humanities especially in writings on languages and literature.

**Types of Citation Styles**

1. APA - American Psychological Association
2. MLA - Modern Language Association
3. Chicago / Turabian Style
4. Harvard (formerly known as AGPS)
5. AAA - American Anthropological Association
6. ACS - American Chemical Society
7. AMA - American Medical Association
8. APSA - American Political Science Association
9. ASA - American Sociological Association

American Antiquity

**In-Text Citations: Author/Authors**

1. A work by two authors: Name both authors in the signal phrase or in the parentheses each time you cite the work. Use the word “and” between the authors’ names within the text and use the ampers and (&) in the parentheses. For example, Research by Alemna and Badu (2005) showed…… or (Alemna& Badu, 2005)
2. A work by three to five authors: List all the authors in the signal phrase or in parentheses the first time you cite the source. For example, (Alemna, Badu, Kissiedu, Adjei & Akusah, 2006). In subsequent citations, only the first author’s name followed by “et al.” in the signal phrase or in parentheses. For example, ( Alemna et al. , 2006)
3. Six and more authors: Use the first author’s name followed by et al. in the signal phrase or in parentheses. For example, Bannerman et al. (2001) argued……or ( Bannerman et al. , 2001)

**APA Reference List: Author/Authors**

The following rules for handling works by a single author or multiple authors apply to all APA style references in your reference list, regardless of the type of work (book, article, electronic resources, etc.)

**APA Reference List: Books (Basic format)**

1. Author (s)
2. (Year of publication)
3. Title of work: Capital letter to begin subtitle.
4. Location:
5. Publisher.
6. Page number.

**APA Reference List: Articles in Periodicals**

1. Author(s)
2. Year in brackets.
3. Title of article.
4. Title of Periodical,
5. Volume number (issue number),
6. Pages.

EXAMPLES

1. APA - American Psychological Association 5th edition

**Book with a single author**

Bernstein, T.M. (1965). *The careful writer.* New York:

Atheneum. p. 25

**Book with two to six authors**

Nayak, A.K. & Rao, V. K. (2004). *Introduction to educational psychology.* New Delhi: A.P.H. Publishing Corporation.

**Edited Book**

Gurman, A.S. (1981). Family therapy. In: M.N. Blum (Ed.), *Handbook of family therapy* (pp. 742-775). New York: Springer.

**Journal Article (in print)**

Horowitz, L.M., Post, D.L., French, R.S., & Siegel, E.Y. (1981).The prototype as a construct. *Journal of Psychology*, 90, 575-585.

**Journal Articles from Online Databases**

Blakeslee, D.J. (1981). The origin and spread of the calumet ceremony. *American Antiquity*, 46 (4),759-768. Retrieved October 3, 2005, from JSTOR database.

**Websites**

**Multi Page Website**

Greater Vancouver Regional District, Task Force on Teen and Adolescent Issues.(n.d.) *Who has time for a healthy meal?* Retrieved May 23, 2003 from <http://www.gvrd>.bc.ca/teen/issues/.

**Portion of a Website**

American Psychological Association. (1998). Managing traumatic stress: Tips for recovering from disaster and other traumatic events. Retrieved April 15, 2001, from American Psychological Association, Help Center Web Site: <http://helping.apa.org/>family/warning.html

**Copyright Law**

The World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) defines copyright as a legal term that describes the rights given to creators for their literary and artistic works. According to Harrod (1981), copyright refers to a procedure whereby the originator of a piece of intellectual property such as a book, article or piece of music receives due recompense for inventiveness or imagination expended. Copyright is the branch of law that holds the legal provisions on the rights of writers, artists and other creative persons to determine how their literary or artistic works may be used. For a creation to be regarded as a piece of work, it must have attained the high standard required of a work, meaning that it should display originality or individuality as a result of the originators personal making. It is a legal term/concept that gives the creator of original work “exclusive rights” to control the use of his/her work for a limited time. These rights are:

* the right to make copies,
* the right to be credited for the work,
* the right to determine who may adapt the work to other derivative forms, such as translations, performance, financial benefit from the work, and other related rights.

Authors may transfer by contract those rights to publishers, or users, to authorize them to make copies, translations, performances, recordings…However, authors do not have monopoly to control all uses of their works: the law foresees some legal exceptions to the benefit of the public.

**Main Issues in a Copyright Law**

1. Gives monopoly to authors and creators in order to stimulate intellectual and artistic creativity.
2. Authors and creators may transfer their monopolistic rights to publishers for marketing purposes.
3. Users/Publics have rights in the form of fair use (academic purposes and knowledge improvement).

**Items covered in the Copyright Law**

In Ghana the following works are eligible for copyright protection: art, sound recordings, literature, musical works, choreography, audio-visual works, and computer programs. In addition, any derivative works (any work based on an already copyrighted work) is also granted copyright protection. However, there is a specific criterion a work must meet in order to be protected. For example, the work must be original and must already be “fixed in definite medium of expression”. Ideas or concepts are not entitled to copyright protection. Additionally, the creator must be a citizen of Ghana or the work must have been published in Ghana before anywhere else

**Three Copyright Acts of Ghana:**

1. Copyright Act 85 of 1961
2. PNDC Law 110
3. Copyright Act 690 of 2005

**The Library is mentioned under the third Section, Permitted Uses of Copyright Sub-Section 21 of the Copyright Law in Ghana.**

1. A library or archive with activities that are not for gain may, without the authorization of the author of copyright, make a single copy of the work by reprographic reproduction.
2. A reprographic reproduction under subsection (1) may be made when the work reproduced is a published article, other short work or short extract of a work and where the purpose of the reproduction is to satisfy the request of an individual.
3. The library or archive shall under subsection (1) ascertain that the copy is to be used solely for the purpose of study, scholarship or private research.
4. The act of reproduction under subsection (1) a copy is made in order to preserve or replace a copy which has been lost, destroyed or rendered unusable in the permanent collection of similar library or archive if it is impossible to obtain the copy under reasonable conditions.
5. Where a library or, archive requires more than a single copy of a work by reprographic reproduction, the permission for this shall be obtained from the author, other owner of copyright or from an appropriate collective administration society authorized by the publisher.

**Under section 2 of the Bill, the following is stated:**

1. The rights of the author are protected during the life of the author and seventy years after the death of the author.
2. Where a work is co-authored, the rights of the authors referred to are protected during the life of the last surviving author and seventy years after the death of that author.

**Fair Use**

Copyright law provides for the principle, commonly called "fair use" that the reproduction of copyright works for certain limited, educational purposes, does not constitute copyright infringement. The Copyright Act establishes a four factor test, the "fair use test," to use to determine whether a use of a copyrighted work is fair use that does not require the permission of the copyright owner. The fair use test is highly fact specific, and much can turn on seemingly insignificant variations on the proposed use.

To determine whether a proposed use is a fair use, you must consider the following four factors, on which we elaborate more below:

1. **Purpose:** The purpose and character of the use, including whether such use is of a commercial nature, or is for nonprofit education purposes.
2. **Nature:** The nature of the copyrighted work.
3. **Amount:** The amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole.
4. **Effect:** The effect of the use upon the potential market for, or value of, the copyrighted work.

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism means claiming or implying original authorship of (or incorporating material from) someone else's written or creative work, in whole or in part, into one's own without adequate acknowledgement. It deals with e.g. pictures, text, graphs or diagrams. Plagiarism occurs by direct copying or by repetition without stating the source. As long as the source can be accounted for satisfactorily, a summary or a representation of another writer’s piece of work is not considered as plagiarism. It also means presenting the words, phrases, ideas or work of another, including certain facts and statistics, as if they were your own.

As a student, you are expected to create original work to fulfill the requirements of the courses you take. Fair evaluation can occur only when submitted work reflects each student's efforts and aptitude. As a scholar, you are expected to cite the sources you use to support your arguments. Acknowledging the works and ideas of others demonstrates respect for the contributions of other authors and confers value to your own original work.

To avoid plagiarizing, you must clearly acknowledge the source of any borrowed language or ideas that you present in your own work. Quotation marks, followed by documentation, should be used to indicate the exact words of others. A signal phrase identifying a source and/or parenthetical citation or a superscript number should denote the summarized or paraphrased ideas of others, depending on the particular citation style the paper follows.

Plagiarism is therefore academic fraud or literary theft and puts one’s academic integrity into disrepute. It is the practice of taking someone else’s work, idea, invention, etc. and passing it off as one’s own.

A student who is considered guilty of plagiarism will receive a caution and risks being suspended from the institution.

**Examples of plagiarism**

* Copying a text from the Internet, from a book or an article, without citing the source and handing it in as your own;
* Rewriting a text in your own words without stating your source;
* Paying for an essay and presenting it as your own;
* Handing in another student’s work under your own name;
* Copying statistics, maps, tables or charts without stating your source;
* State someone else's artistic work as your own.

**Strategies for Success**

To avoid plagiarizing accidentally:

* Keep accurate notes when doing research
* Educate yourself on plagiarism policy
* Master the procedure for citing sources; and
* Learn to paraphrase without borrowing the language or structure used in an original source.

**To avoid the temptation to plagiarize intentionally:**

* Visit your instructor during office hours and ask questions in class to clarify course requirements or instructions for assignments;
* Consult the web-based resources in the webliography that follows. These sources will help you through the stages of writing a research paper, from planning to polishing;
* Consider the consequences of plagiarism before you try passing off the work of another as your own.

**Consequences of Plagiarism / Penalties**

The consequences or penalties for cases of plagiarism range from disciplinary sanctions such as probation, suspension, and dismissal to educational interventions such as attending a workshop or writing a paper. In addition, any work that is the product of plagiarism is generally assigned a grade of zero by the instructor.

If you are caught plagiarizing, it is possible that not only will you be removed from your course and institution, but you may never be able to study for a degree again. The problem is that students today are faced not only with increasing pressure and a consequent temptation to plagiarize, but also with the potential to plagiarize being ever more available via the Internet amongst other things. Since plagiarism is on the increase, you should not fall into the trap of thinking that because some people are tempted to plagiarize this somehow reduces its seriousness and therefore, the likelihood of you facing plagiarism consequences when caught.

The consequences of plagiarism could seriously endanger your academic career because your record will follow you, and should you be compelled to leave your course of study, then you will find it extremely difficult to obtain a place elsewhere because no college or university will want a student who has proved himself to be dishonest and unworthy. These may seem very harsh words but it is no exaggeration to say that for a moment of foolishness you may well be sacrificing your academic career.

Should you embark on a longer piece of work, such as a dissertation or thesis, and plagiarize, the work will probably be destroyed. In fact, in these cases, your work will be scrutinized even more carefully for any instance of plagiarism and the consequences of any plagiarism discovered will be even more severe because originality is the basis of this type of high-level research and you will be required to produce work of publication standard.