

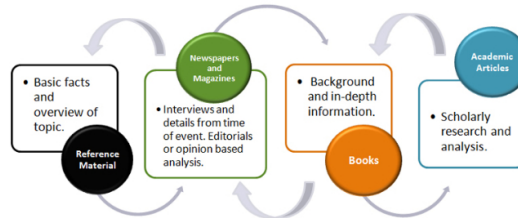
Step 2- Undertake Some Background Reading

Introduction

After coming up with an idea for a topic, students usually begin by undertaking some **brief background reading**. If the topic is new to you, it's often best to begin with general (background) sources before gradually moving to more specific (detailed) sources.

Background sources are especially useful for Business students when you're in the **idea generation stage**. Finding good background information on a general topic can help you to turn this topic into a research question.

If you're not sure where to begin, try using this method suggested by **IUPUI (Indiana) Libraries**:



Source: <http://iupui.campusguides.com/startyourresearch/knowledgecycle>

Reference Materials

- Encyclopedias, dictionaries and handbooks are also known as **Reference Materials**. Beginning with reference materials will usually offer you a **broad overview of a topic**, provide definitions and terms, some encyclopedias will also suggest further reading of books and journal articles that will help you to frame your topic.
- Also a good idea to return to reference materials if you encounter concepts or terms later in your research that you don't understand.

UNB WorldCat

- Books** are also good resources which can offer some background as well as more in-depth information. A good strategy is to scan the **Table of Contents** plus the **Index** located in the back of the book, to see if the book focuses on your topic or specific aspects of it.
- Newspapers and Magazines** are useful when you're in need of current information about your topic/event to understand more about how popular opinion is trending.
- Scholarly journal articles** are usually very specific (and often more technical) so having some general background knowledge about the topic **before** reading journal articles can be a wise strategy.

Useful Questions To Explore

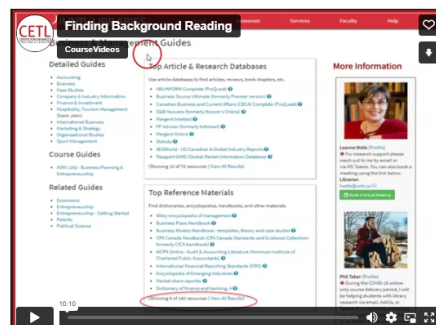
Not only will background reading go a long way in helping you to learn more about your topic, you are likely to come across **additional questions** that you may wish to investigate further.

As you're reading, try asking yourself the following questions:

- Are there common questions/themes that relate to my topic?
- Can I break this topic down into parts?
- Do I understand all the terms being used in my reading?
- What is controversial about this topic?
- What research have scholars already pursued in relation to my topic?
- Are there different viewpoints about the topic that I need to take into account?
- How current must the information be?
- Are there important keywords or concepts I need to keep in mind when I begin searching databases?

Background Reading - Reference Materials

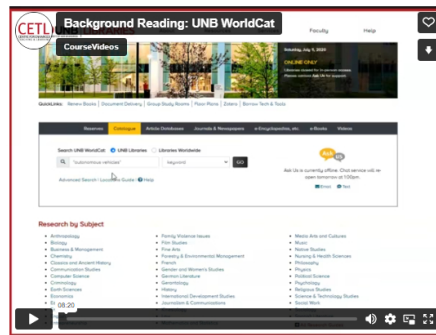
This video offers a strategy when using our business reference materials. Keep in mind that reference materials usually provide a **broad overview** plus some useful definitions. Encyclopedias will also offer a bibliography that lists suggestions for further reading of books and journal articles to help you frame your topic.



Background Reading - UNB WorldCat

UNB WorldCat is also a great starting point offering access to books, eBooks, some journal articles, videos and more. Unlike Reference Materials, UNB WorldCat offers students a **more focused and detailed approach** to your topic.

Background Reading: UNB WorldCat



While Reading - Take Good Notes

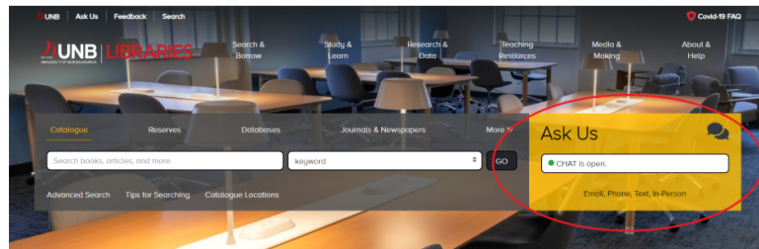
As you read, you may wish to incorporate some of information you find from your background reading in your report/assignment, it's important to **keep a record of what you plan to incorporate** along with the source (encyclopedia, book or article) where the information came from.

Taking good notes as you read comes in handy when you begin to write your paper. It also **saves you time** as you won't need to go back to find the same information twice! Below is a list of elements worthy of including when note-taking:

- a **full citation** for the source (author, date, title, URL)
- a summary of the key concepts or main arguments written in your own words
- useful quotes should always be written using quotation marks noting the page number
- a comparison of these concepts with others that you have read
- questions that arose when reading, which were not answered by the text
- your thoughts on how these ideas relate to your assignment topic and how you might incorporate them

Need Help? Ask Us!

If you're unsure how to go about finding background information, try chatting with library staff using our **Ask Us** online chat service on the [library website](#).



QUICK TIP

Once you've completed some background reading for your topic, **you're ready to begin crafting a search strategy** using our library-subscribed databases.

The **keywords and concepts** you've discovered in your background reading should be very useful when crafting your search!

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Activity Details

- Task: View this topic