

# Literature Review Research: Where to Start and Helpful Practices

## Where To Start:

### Google

Most of the topics you can choose for your term paper are very broad subjects you most likely have little experience with. The best way to become familiar with this field is to do a general google search (which will produce thousands of articles). Use Google to narrow down your search then move to databases.

### Databases

Listed below are some comprehensive databases. This is not an exhaustive list (but these will be the most helpful). When using a database, make sure to filter the results using specific keywords or phrases. If you are doing a horizontal or cross paper approach, make sure you are limiting your search to specific years (usually within the last 10 years).

[Academic Search Complete](#)

[American Chemical Society](#)

[MDPI](#)

[OHIOLink](#)

[PubMed](#)

[Scopus](#)

[Science Direct](#)

[Springer](#)

Researchgate.net and Wikipedia are NOT acceptable sources. If you have questions about a source, please reach out to the TAs.

### KSL Resources

[Literature Review Overview](#)

## Helpful Practices:

- *Take notes while reading sources.* It will make writing the outline/paper easier and help you identify recurring topics in the research that you may want to focus on.
- *Write down what you search.* Sometimes using synonyms of keywords will help you get more specific results.

- *Broaden or narrow your search* accordingly. Some topics will produce 10,000+ papers while others may only produce 1000. Remember that a review article is a summary of the field. Using filters on your search engine will help you.
- *Look up terms you don't know*, especially if they appear in multiple papers. While we will cover characterization techniques and polymer properties later in this class, these analysis techniques will appear in most if not all research papers you read. If a quick google search doesn't help, please reach out to the TAs!
- *Follow the source*. While review articles are not acceptable sources for your review, they are a great place to get acquainted with the field. Review articles are written from research articles, so any sources the review article cites are acceptable sources for your paper (as long as you read them independently of the review article you found them in).
- *Conflicting information is usually not a mistake* (although sometimes it can be). Research is unpredictable. You may notice while reading research articles that the same experiment yielded different results from different researchers. Take note of this and the differences between the experiments as this may be a focus point for your final paper.
- *Do the work upfront*. The more effort you put into researching and understanding the material, the easier it will be to write a concise final paper.
- *Start early*. Research takes time and rushing through it only makes it more difficult.