Doing Research – A Guide

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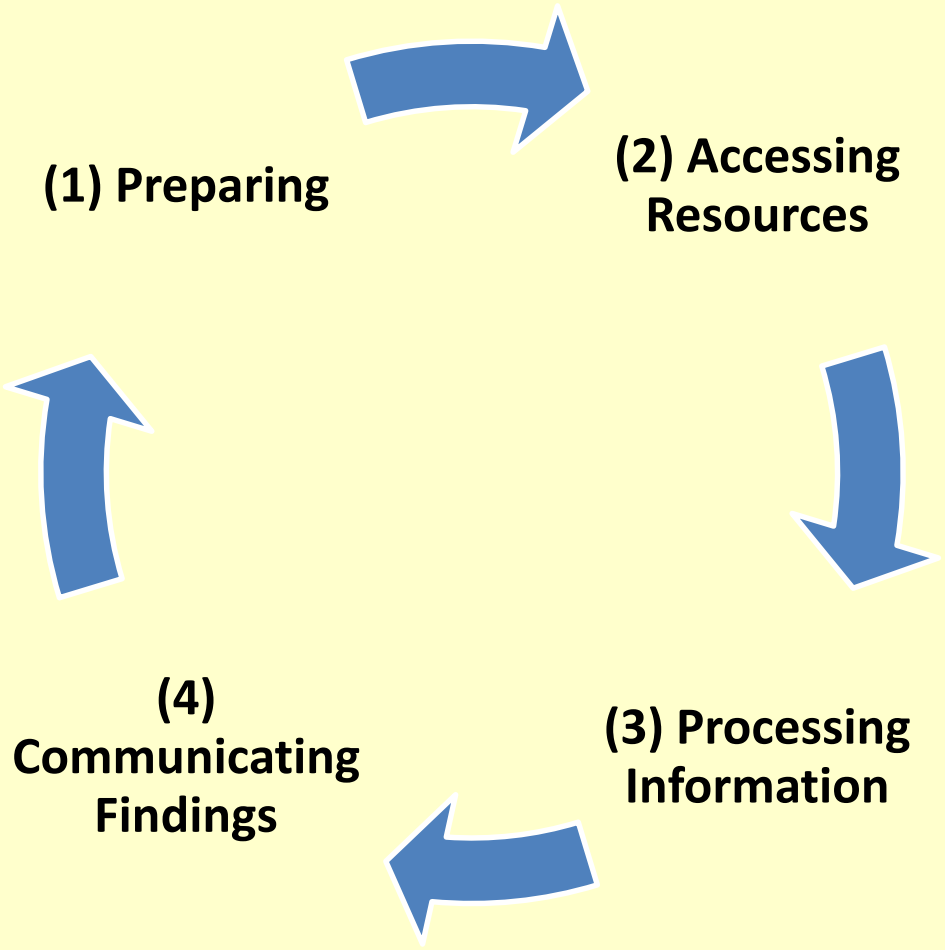
By the end of this lecture you will be able to:

- Identify the four stages of research.
- Analyse the questions that are asked of you.
- Develop keywords that are likely to find the information that you are searching for.
- Critically evaluate sources of information, particularly websites.
- Know where to access learning support in NCI.

Four Stages of Research



Being a “curious researcher” (Ballenger, 2007: 10)

The understanding that inquiry is driven by questions not answers

The willingness to suspend judgment and to tolerate ambiguity

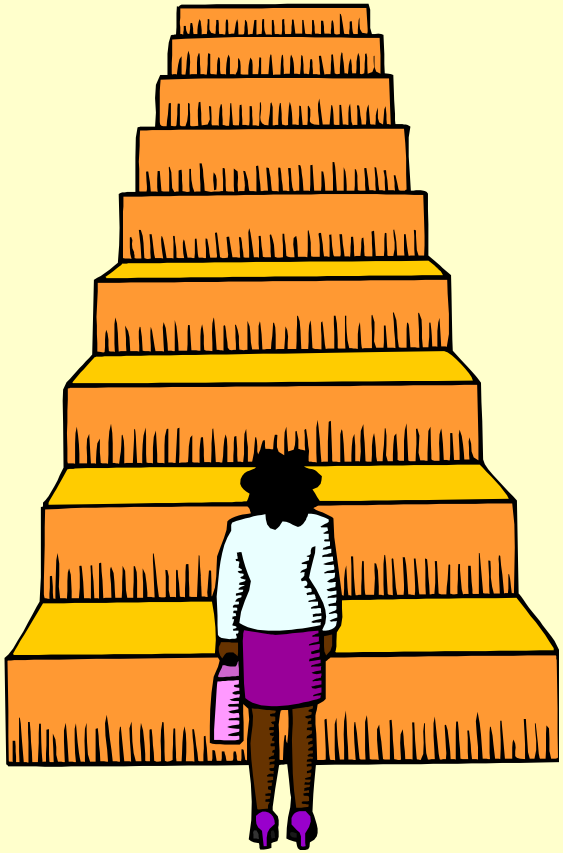
The writer’s willingness to take responsibility for his or her ideas, accepting both the credit for and the consequence of putting forth these ideas for dialogue and debate.

(1) PREPARING FOR RESEARCH: UNDERSTANDING THE QUESTION

First steps….

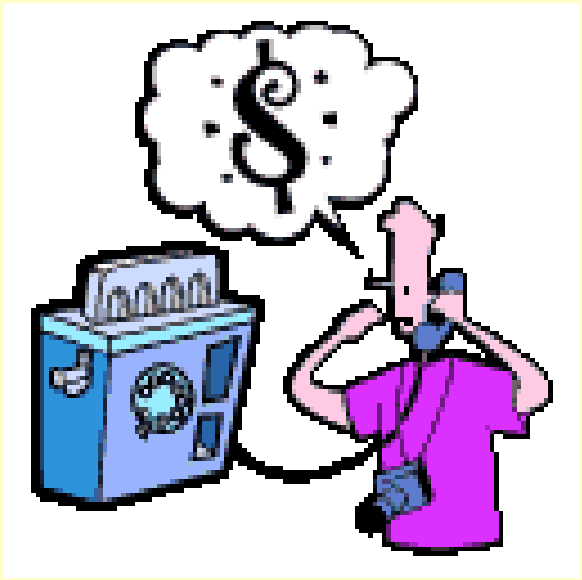
Requirements?

- Length
- Marking Scheme
- Submission Date
- Communicating findings
  - Written report
  - Worksheet
  - Email….



Understanding The Question

Use a dictionary/thesaurus /online resources to look up any words you don't know



Ask for help! e.g. your lecturer, your classmates….

Some words to help

Analyse	Break it down into parts. Tell about each of the parts.
Compare	Tell all the ways they are the same.
Contrast	Tell all the ways they are different
Describe	Tell me about it. Give details about it. Paint a picture with words.
Evaluate	Tell the good and the bad. Judge it.
Explain	Teach me or show me. Tell the steps.
Formulate	Come up with, make a plan, develop, make, or create.
Infer	Read between the lines. What is the hidden meaning?
Predict	Make an educated (smart) guess, based on evidence.
Summarise	Tell the main details in a concise way.
Support	Back up the information. Prove or provide evidence
Trace	Follow, track, outline, list in steps.

(2) ACCESSING RESOURCES

Where to look?

- NCI Library – guides available on the portal
  - Books/Ebooks
  - Journals

- Online
  - Google
  - Google Scholar
  - Google Books
  - Wikipedia

Excellent starting point

BUT…created by members of the public

SO…this can happen

(images via HuffingtonPost.com)

Bernie Madoff…stockbroker and financier convicted of fraud

Personal life

Bernie Madoff is a very clever asshole who stole shitloads of money to better himself and his family which better land his ass in jail. Either way, he is going to hell. Madoff was born to Ralph and Sylvia Madoff His father was the son of Polish-Jewish immigrants and his mother, the child of Romanian and Austrian immigrants.[18] They practiced Judaism and raised their son in Laurelton, Queens.[19] Ralph Madoff was a plumber before becoming a stockbroker.[20]

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Cats in ancient Egypt

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Cats *(Felis silvestris catus)*, known in ancient Egypt as the miw, played a large role in ancient Egyptian society. Beginning as a wild, untamed specie were useful for keeping down vermin populations in the Egyptians' crops and harvests; through exposure to humans, the cat population became domesticated over time and learned to coexist with the human population. The people inhabiting the area which would later become unified and knc Upper and Lower Egypt had a religion centering around the worship of animals, of which the cat became one.

Originally praised for its aid to humans in controlling vermin and its ability to fight and kill snakes (such as cobras), the domesticated cat slowly beca symbol of grace and poise. The goddess Mafdet, the deification of justice and execution, was a fierce lion-headed goddess. The cat goddess Bast (known as *Bastet*) eventually replaced the cult of Mafdet, and Bast's image softened over time and she became the deity representing protection, fer and motherhood.

As a re... Mummifi... cats and kittens. This discovery outside the town of Beni Hasan contained around eighty thousand cat mummies, dating back to 1000-2000 BC.

AVRIL LAVIGNE ROKZ MY SOCKZ!

Contents [hide]

1 Cats in everyday life in Ancient Egypt
2 Cats in Egyptian mythology
3 Bubastis and the Cult of the Cat
4 Funerary traditions
5 Cats in other religions
6 The decline of cat-worship
7 References
8 See also

Cats in everyday life in Ancient Egypt

Feral cats, or "wild cats", naturally preyed upon the rats and other vermin that would otherwise eat from the royal granaries. They earned their place

Batman

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

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DUN NUH NUH NUH NUH NUH DUH NUH NUH NUH NUH NUH
BATMAN! DUN NUH NUH NUH NUH NUH DUH NUH NUH NUH
NUH NUH BATMAN! DUN NUH NUH NUH NUH NUH DUH NUH
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BATMAN! DUN NUH NUH NUH NUH NUH DUH NUH NUH NUH
NUH NUH **BATMAN**!!!

How to Look?

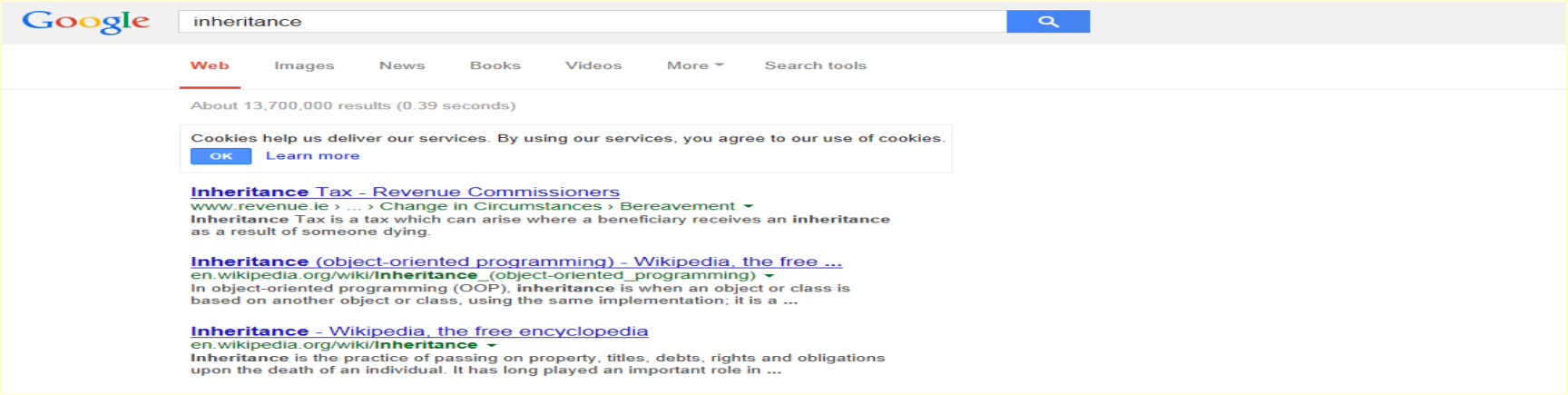
- Identify **keywords** or **search terms** – a natural language search won't find your answer

  e.g. *"Is there a link between violence in the media and crime?"*

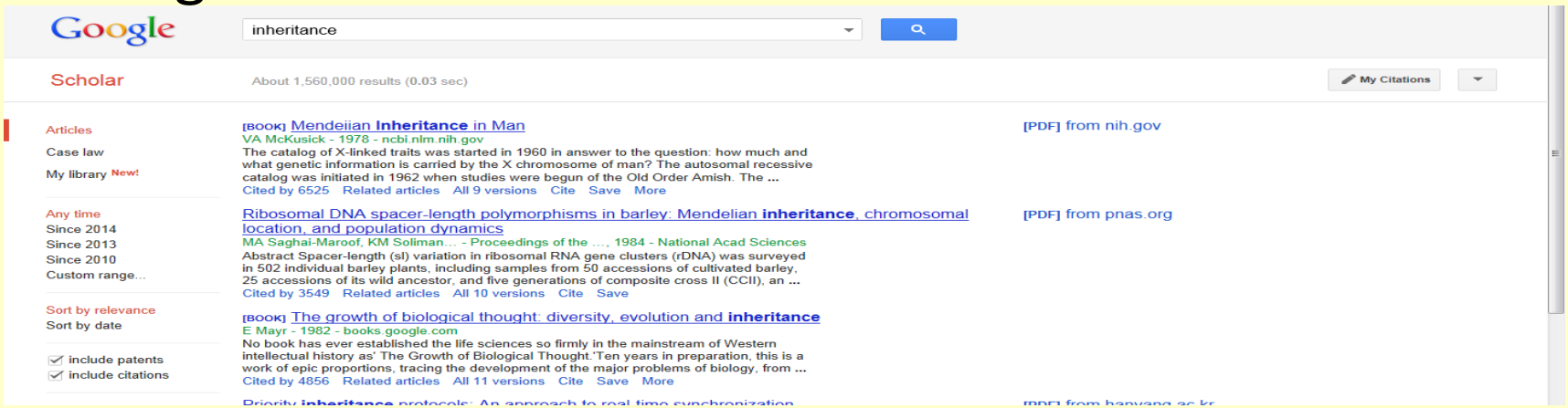
What keywords would you suggest?

e.g. inheritance

- Google

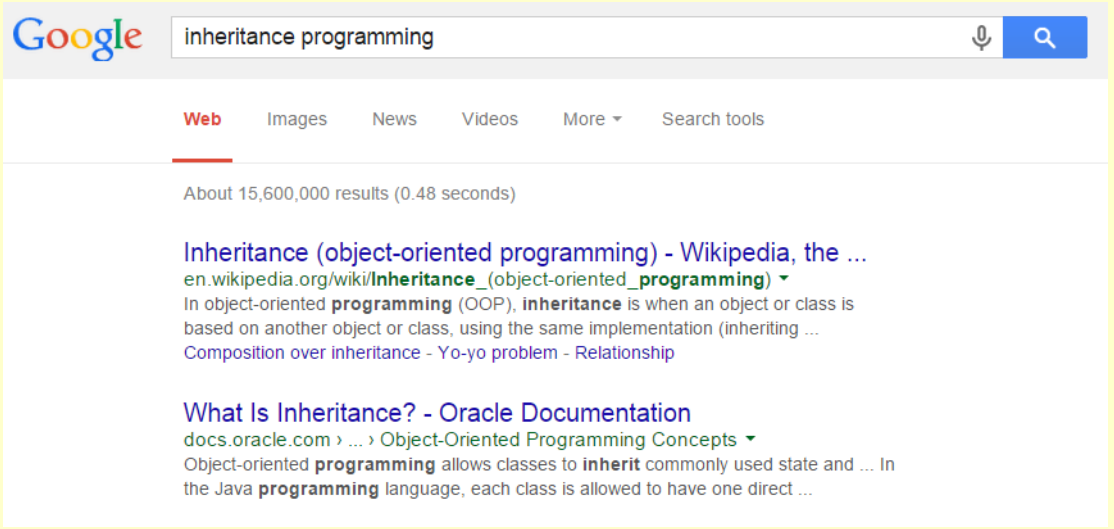


- Google Scholar



e.g. inheritance & programming

- Google



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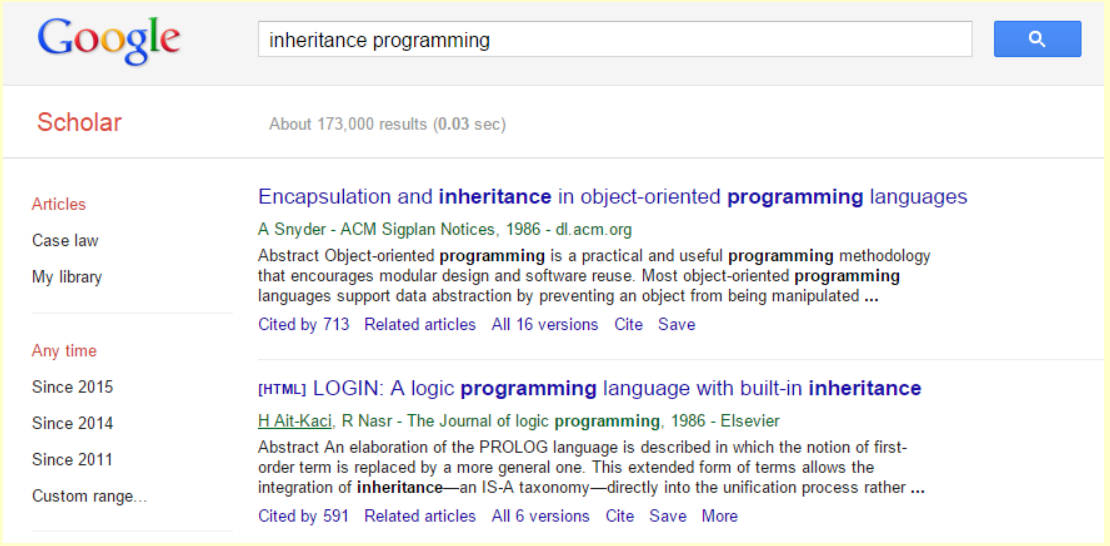


Boolean Search Terms

Quotation Marks

- Requires words be searched as a phrase, in the exact order you type them
- E.g. “inheritance in computer programming”

OR

- Allows more than one search term – will return sites that contain any of the words. Normally used as part of a more detailed search..
  - E.g. inheritance java OR ruby

AND

- Will only return searches containing both words – the words you connected with AND, the fewer results you will get as it only returns sites that contain both words
- This isn’t actually required for Google – it will assume AND between all words – see https://support.google.com/websearch/answer/2466433?hl=en for more

(3) PROCESSING INFORMATION

Critically Assess the Information

Ask yourself some questions…..

Is the information relevant?

Is the information accurate?

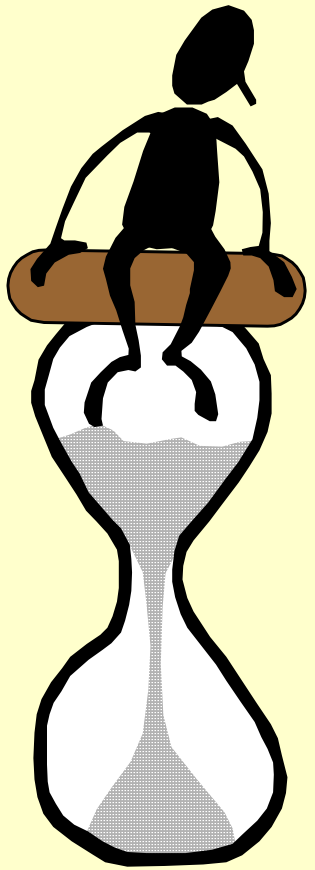
What point of view is the information from?

Is this information likely to be fair and representative?

Patience

- Avoid assuming that the first website you find is the best

- Keep looking, and ensure that any information you find is supported by a number of sources



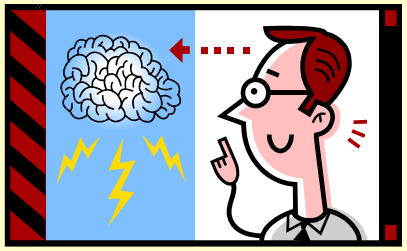
Evaluating Websites

Some words of advice

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ylp9nJpGak4

Making Notes

- Record as you go!



(4) COMMUNICATING INFORMATION

Consider…

- Requirements of the assignment
- Evaluation procedures
- Time – deadlines
- Format – visuals, oral, written, electronic or a combination
- Software tools
- Organisation and presentation
- Demonstrating evidence of knowledge of topic based on solid research and personal reflection
- **NB – remember your audience!**

Questions??