The Research Cycle

DEVELOPING YOUR TOPIC

1. Go online and start exploring possible topics.
   - If you have to start over, try searching your topic in an encyclopedia database.
   - If the results look promising move on to the next step.

2. Use popular sources to help you get background information.

3. Help to identify and develop those key words.
   - Don't get discouraged if you still need to tweak your topic some more.

4. Test your ideas in the database using your key words.

5. Try combining different key words to get different results. You may find better keywords once you start finding articles that align with your topic.

6. Read the journal articles you find. They might not fit your topic 100% but they still might contain useful information for your paper.

7. Eventually you will find enough information to begin writing your paper.

However, it is not unusual to return to the research cycle to find additional sources.

If at any time you need help, you can schedule an appointment with a librarian!
askus.lib.lsu.edu