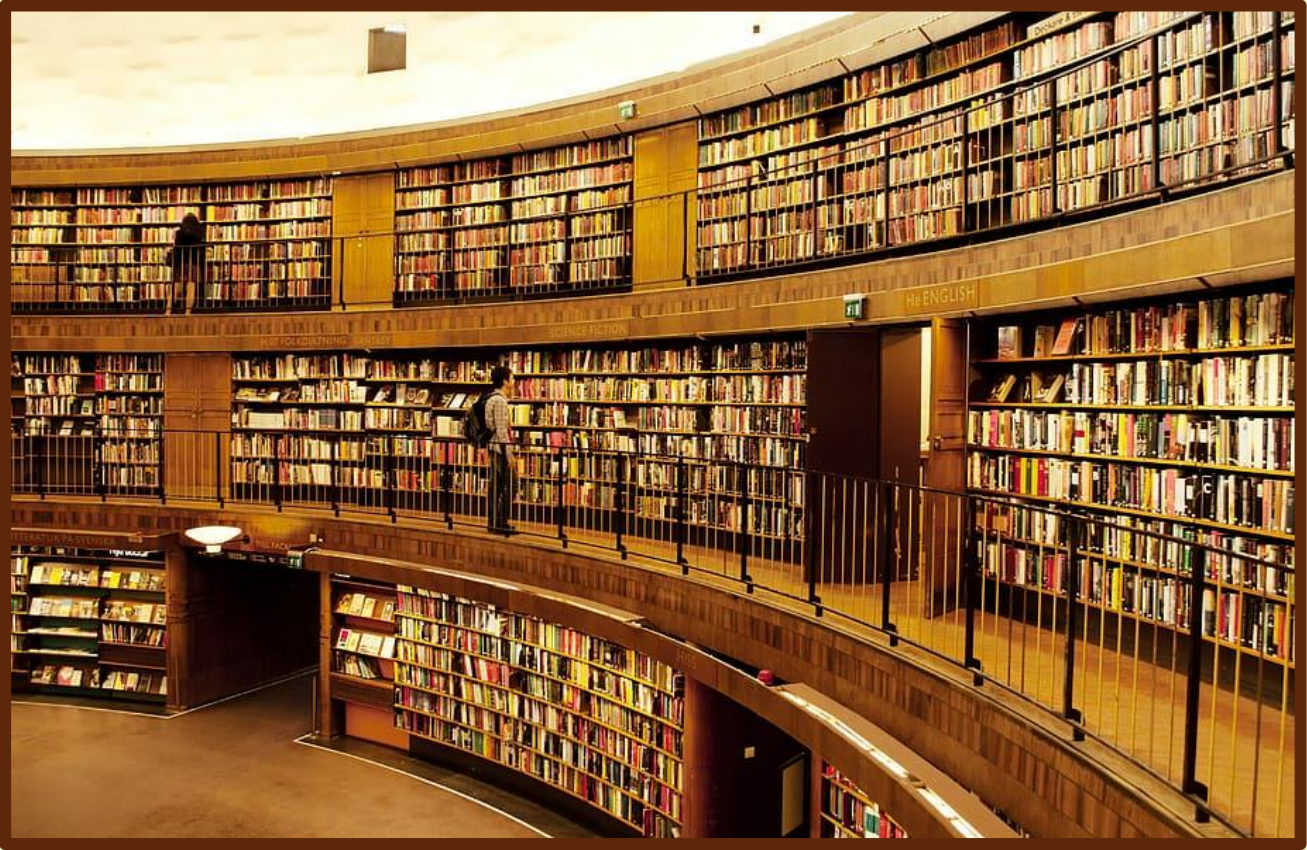


Library Research Report Assignment



This assignment is due at the end of Week Two. Please submit your work through the “Library Research Report” assignment link in Week Two.

Length:

400-600 words. 4-6 entries; about 60-120 words per source .

Purpose/goals of the assignment:

- Develop your ability to conduct scholarly research and relate the results of this research to a specific inquiry.
- Develop your ability to translate specialist information into non-specialist language draft building blocks for the final report.
- Practice APA citation style (or MLA if you are majoring in a humanities field).

Assignment Introduction:

Answering a research question involves seeking out and processing information that helps you answer that question. This is true whether you are researching insurance plans or conducting academic research. In developing the Library Research Report, you will seek out **scholarly articles** relevant to your research question, extracting ideas from them that you will later synthesize into a final report (i.e., the final version of your project) and an answer—however tentative—to your research question.

This Library Research Report can be seen as a type of “annotated bibliography.” But please note that your goal in developing this report is not simply to summarize sources; your purpose here is to focus on finding research that is relevant to your *research question*. As you write your summaries, you will be producing “building blocks” for the first draft of your Final Research Project. This means that you should be summarizing *only content that is directly relevant to your research question*. Your writing should also be clear and accessible to non-specialist readers. A carefully constructed Library Research Report will significantly lighten your workload when you reach Week Three, when the rough draft of your Final Research Project is due, since you’ll be able to construct your draft from writing you’ve already completed rather than starting from scratch.

Assignment Specifications

Your finished Library Research Report should include:

- Your name at the top of the document. (You can follow strict APA if you’d like and include a separate title page, but this is not required);
- Your research question (at the top of the report);
- Complete and correct citations for 4-6 scholarly, peer-reviewed journal articles accessed through NU Library databases;
- A paragraph of 60-120 words on each source that answers the following questions:

WHO?

Who stands behind the information? Your entry should identify (quickly and concisely) the background/credentials that connect the article’s author/s to the topic. (See Lecture 6 in the Week Two Lectures folder) on identifying scholarly sources for guidance and examples: Identifying Sources (Part 2)

WHAT?

Identify a claim (or claims) presented in the article that is relevant to your inquiry. (Remember, your task is not to summarize the entire article, but to summarize the article content that is relevant for your own inquiry. In some cases, of course, the entire article may be directly relevant to your project.)

HOW?

How is the claim supported? How do the authors back up the claim? (Don’t go nuts here and summarize every detail of the methodology. Instead, strive for the kind of concise, general summary one might find in a news account of recent research findings.)

SO WHAT?

What is the relevance of the claim for your inquiry? (Sometimes you'll be able to express the "what" and "so what" at the same time, in which case you shouldn't try to artificially separate them. Just make sure that your paragraph addresses all of the categories—WHO, WHAT, HOW, and SO WHAT? And remember that your answer to the "so what?" question should point to your own research inquiry.)

Tip! If you're having trouble getting started, tackle each of the above questions—Who/What/How/So What?—one at a time. Before you know it, you'll have written—or at least sketched out—your first paragraph.

Note: Limit your use of direct quotation. Quote only when you need to call attention to key terms or phrases. Use complete sentences, correct spelling and punctuation, etc.

Example: Sample Library Research Report

Source-selection checklist:

This assignment requires you to engage with specialist sources—specifically, peer-reviewed journal articles. If a source you've found is a peer-reviewed journal article, you should be able to answer "yes" to all of the questions below:

CONTENT

Does the source read like a scholarly article? (If it sounds more like a news article or a review, it's probably not a scholarly article.)

CITATIONS/REFERENCES

Does the article include in-text citations and end references? Is the Reference list fairly substantial (i.e., more than just a handful of citations)?

CREDENTIALS

Is the author's institutional affiliation noted? (For example, does a university or government email address accompany the byline? Or is there a bio that explains the author's area/s of expertise?)

PEER-REVIEWED

Is the journal listed in Ulrichsweb as peer-reviewed? (For a review of how to use Ulrichsweb, see the Journal Databases Activity. Remember that you search Ulrichsweb by journal title, not by article title.)

Citation help

Feel free to use citation-generator tools such as those found in library databases; just remember to check these computer-generated citations carefully. Here is a short APA reference sheet you may find helpful: http://nu.libguides.com/ld.php?content_id=8766101

You'll notice that APA no longer requires that you identify the database from which you retrieved an article. It's fine, though, if you want to include this information. (Some instructors still prefer to see this information included.)

If you are having trouble finding peer-reviewed sources relevant to your topic...

- Widen the lens. Remember, a “relevant” source is rarely a source on your exact topic. As noted in the Journal Databases Activity and in Lecture 4 in the Week Two Lectures folder, [video lecture on “The myth of the perfect source,”](#) a relevant peer-reviewed source is any source that can help you bring a scholarly perspective to your topic.
- Ask for help from an NU reference librarian: <http://library.nu.edu/>
- Where appropriate, bring in one or two (1-2) **in-depth**, high-quality sources that are not peer-reviewed journal articles. For example, your searching may uncover an in-depth piece of investigative reporting or a major government report that is relevant to your topic. For a review of how to distinguish between a regular news report and an in-depth news report, see the supplemental practice activity: Do a News Search, located in the guidelines for the Web Search Activity. For each source you include in your Library Research Report that is *not* peer-reviewed, take extra care to establish who stands behind the information and why the information can be regarded as reliable.

Grading information

Note: Points will be deducted for deviations from assignment requirements/specifications. Greater deviations will result in greater deductions. Per course policy, scores of 50% and higher are reserved for submissions that attempt to meet assignment requirement/specifications [see below]. ↓

A	B	C	D	F
Source selection meets assignment requirements; sources are strong and skillfully chosen for direct relevance and for the substance and complexity they bring to the inquiry.	Source selection meets assignment requirements; sources are strong and relevant to the inquiry.	Sources meet assignment requirements. A small percentage of the sources may exhibit problems such as insufficient currency, relevancy, or depth.	Sources mostly meet assignment requirements, but a significant percentage of the sources exhibit problems such as insufficient currency, relevancy, or depth.	Sources mostly do not meet assignment requirements. Many source-selection problems.
What? and So What? are addressed clearly, concisely, and accurately.	What? and So What? are addressed clearly and accurately.	What? and So What? are, for the most part, addressed clearly and accurately.	What? and So What? are addressed unclearly or inaccurately in several parts of the report.	What? and So What? are addressed unclearly or inaccurately in most parts of the report.
How? question is addressed clearly, concisely, and accurately.	How? question is addressed clearly and accurately.	How? question is, for the most part, addressed clearly and accurately.	How? question is addressed unclearly or inaccurately in several parts of the report.	How? question is addressed unclearly or inaccurately in most parts of the report.
Who? question is addressed clearly, concisely, and accurately.	Who? question is addressed clearly and accurately.	Who? question is, for the most part, addressed clearly and accurately.	Who? question is addressed unclearly or inaccurately in several parts of the report.	Who? question is addressed unclearly or inaccurately in most parts of the report.
Relationship between entry and research question is unambiguous; strong alignment between sources and inquiry	Relationship between entry and research question is sufficiently clear; good alignment between sources and inquiry	Relationship between entry and research question is unclear in places; some apparent misalignment between sources and inquiry	Relationship between entry and research question is unclear in places and cannot be easily inferred; significant misalignment between sources and inquiry	Relationship between entry and research question is unclear for most of the report; report content mostly does not align with inquiry as expressed in

the research
question

Confidence in use of Standard English, language reflects a practiced and/or refined understanding of syntax and usage.	Conveys a good understanding of Standard English; the writer is clear in his/her attempt to articulate ideas, but may demonstrate moments of “flat” or unrefined language.	Presence of sentence-level errors and awkwardness of expression, but not of such frequency and severity as to significantly impede understanding.	Awkward expression and sentence-level errors occur frequently, often impeding understanding.	Awkward expression and sentence-level errors occur throughout the report and significantly impede understanding.
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Adheres to APA citation format (MLA for arts/humanities majors)	Adheres to APA citation format (MLA for arts/humanities majors); occasional citation errors are minor and are at the level of presentation.	Evidence of attempt to adhere to APA citation format (MLA for arts/humanities majors), but with a few errors in presentation and content that could create some difficulty for readers trying to understand or locate sources.	Insufficient adherence to APA citation format (MLA for arts/humanities majors); significant/communication-impeding errors in presentation and content of source citations.	Major deviations from APA or MLA citation format
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