

**Quick Guide :: 5 STEPS TO BETTER LIBRARY RESEARCH**

**1. Get Started**

Start by choosing a broad topic:

**2. Gather Background Information**

Before you begin your research, get background information on your topic. This will save you time and prevent frustration!

Start by looking in:

- : Encyclopedias
- : Dictionaries
- : Class textbooks

**Note:** These resources can often provide you with a list of books and articles on your topic.

**3. Narrow your Topic**

When writing a term paper, it is critical to choose a topic that is not too broad. Narrow the focus of your topic, limit by:

**LIMITERS**

Time:.....

Place:.....

Person or group:.....

Aspect:.....

Other Limiters:.....

**Note:** Choose at least 3 limiters using the above examples, or come up with your own.

**4. Form a Search Question**

Now that you have your topic narrowed, it is useful to phrase it in the form of a question.

**This helps you to:**

- : Keep your research focused
- : Choose resources that provide answers
- : Develop a thesis statement

**Question:** .....

.....

*Adapted from UC-Davis*

**5. Create a Search Term List**

The last step is to create a list of search terms to use when searching for books and articles in MERLIN Catalog and databases.

**A. Identify the key terms and concepts in your research question.**

**B. Choose related terms for your key concepts.**

Key Concepts

Related Terms

- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....

**:: Example Topic**

1. Topic: IMMIGRATION

2. Gather Background Information

3. Limiters:

**Time**.....Current, 1980->

**Place**.....United States

**Person/Group**.....Immigrants

**Aspect**.....Higher education

4. Search Question:

**How has higher education contributed to the success of immigrants in the United States?**

5. Search Term List:

Key Concepts  
Terms

Related  
Terms

Higher education.....college, university

Success .....status, wealth

Immigrants: .....migrants, aliens,

Chicanos, Cubans