



Scholar's Secret Research Strategy Checklist

As You Begin... Insight discovery is an iterative process. This means you won't be able to find all the information you need in one trip to the library or one internet search. Nor will you be able to whip out a final draft in one sitting. Plan to conduct your research in phases: explore, document, and absorb. Then explore, document, and absorb some more. Spend quality time organizing your findings; *then* prepare a first draft. Use this checklist to help you cover your bases; and don't worry if you need to repeat a step or two!

Define your problem or topic; identify related concepts:

- What do you want to learn or need to know?
- In what format(s) might the information you need be presented?
- After you define your topic, you may need to refine it – that's okay!

Explore basic information:

- Seek help from experts – librarians, teachers, and **Scholar's Secret** are excellent resources
- Look up your topic in a subject-specific encyclopedia (ask at the Reference Desk)
- Use the library catalog to find books on your topic (yes, great information can still be found in books!)
- The library catalog is also a great place to “fish for keywords”
- Use these keywords to search the Internet
- Read what experts and others say in published articles (hint: search Indexes to find them)
- Find and interview an expert on your topic – experts are everywhere!
- Evaluate all your sources: make sure they are reliable, reputable, and accurate

Evaluate progress:

- Are there any gaps in your understanding? What questions remain unanswered?
- What connections can you see?
- What sources have not yet been explored?
- Are you on target? If so, begin synthesizing your discoveries.

Write a draft:

- Write it today; perfect it tomorrow
- Allow sufficient time for review
- Fill in the gaps uncovered during your review – but always strive to say more with less!

Prepare final output:

- Proofread and revise... and then proofread and revise again
- Double-check that your output is consistent with project requirements