



## 1. CHOOSE A TOPIC

Choose *something that interests you and fits the assignment*.

Make sure there will be enough sources. Do some pre-searching. You should be able to find at least 3 potential sources in 20 minutes. Ask for help if necessary.

## 2. NARROW OR BROADEN YOUR TOPIC

*Violence* is too broad a topic – you can spend eternity researching it. You could narrow this down by:

Type: domestic violence, gang violence, media violence

Groups: violent men, violent women, violence in gay relationships, child victims, elderly

Geographic Area: violence in Texas

Causes or Effects: poverty, drug abuse, the media, psychological effects, health effects

Don't go overboard on narrowing. Violence on the street where you live is too narrow a topic!

## 3. FIND AN OVERVIEW

You need some *history* about your topic. A subject-specialized encyclopedia is often the best source. These are on the first floor in the Reference Collection and arranged by subject.

## 4. FIND MORE DEPTH

Books have more detailed information on a topic than newspapers or the Internet. You can *skim a book to find the chapters most useful for your paper*.

Use the online card catalog to find books to check-out <http://lib.epcc.edu>.

## 5. RECENT SOURCES

*Newspaper, magazine, and professional journal articles* have more current information.

Find articles in the Online Article Databases <http://www.epcc.edu/vvlib/vvonline.htm>.

## 6. OPEN WEB

*The Open Web has all the web sites that are free.* These are sites you can find using Yahoo or Google or other search engines. Some teachers will not let you use the Open Web because of plagiarism problems.

Web sites with addresses ending in .gov or .edu usually have accurate facts.