Before you dive into our collection, take a few moments to prepare yourself.

**UNDERSTAND YOUR ASSIGNMENT (READ THE DIRECTIONS!)**

Make sure you know the details of the assignment. You may require 5 resources and 2 will need to be scholarly peer-reviewed articles. Maybe you need to have a variety that includes books or newspaper articles published with a certain date. Read the directions so you know what type of resources you are looking for!

**THINK ABOUT WHERE THE RESOURCES ARE LOCATED.**

If I asked you to find me a viral video, many of you would know right where to look on *YouTube*. You know that *YouTube* is an online video database and how to find a certain video. This same thought process can be applied to researching and where to look and NOT look.

If you need Marine Biology information, you probably would not look in an American History Database, right? The Ivy Tech Library has a variety of resources which have specific information on nearly all topics. Look through our resource descriptions to determine what will work for you. And remember, you can always ask a librarian for help!

**FIGURE OUT THE RIGHT SEARCH TERMS OF YOUR RESEARCH.**

When some people search *Google*, they usually type a whole question in the search box. This does not work in academic database searching. You will need to find main subjects or topics of your research to use.

How do you do this? Think about your paper topic in the form of a statement or question. See the three examples below.

- **I want information on vaccinating my kids.**
  What are the main topics of this sentence? Can we agree that “vaccinating” and “kids” are the main subjects? We wouldn’t want to add “information” as one of our search terms because that would be like telling a database “Hey, can you find me information on information?” - it’s redundant.

  Since we are using an academic database, we should use proper wordage or general terms to start:

  vaccinating = vaccination, kids = children

- **Why are kids in America getting chunky?**
  Same steps for this research topic: “kids,” “America,” and “chunky” are our main subjects.

  kids = children, chunky = obesity.
You could just search with these two terms, or you can think about the general term associated with the above: “childhood obesity” combines both terms.

If you want to research with “America,” do recognize that databases may include North AND South American information. If you want information about childhood obesity in the United States, you will need to make that distinction.

America = United States

- **How do I find average prices of black slaves in Colonial America (1700-1780)?**
  You may have a very detailed research topic. The two previous examples are more about finding subject information. Here we are trying to find an answer to a specific question, but we can find it in the same way. Usually there is no book or article titled something as specific as the above question, BUT you can find the answers WITHIN books and articles.

  Here are some search terms I used to find the answer to the question.

  - black slaves = slave trade, average prices = profits
  - (1700-1780) = 18th century (unless it is a specific date, search periods of time)

**THE INFORMATION IS THERE, YOU JUST NEED TO LOOK FOR IT.**

When you have good subjects/topics/search terms, you can search databases to find what you are looking for. Be a detective.

While databases provide great information, don’t forget to look in the *index of a book*. I found the answer to the above question by using an eBook about French Sugar Trade in the 18th Century and searching the index with my search terms, which helped guide me to a chapter with one detailed paragraph.

Always remember that the Ivy Tech Library is here to help you with any and all the steps of your research process.