Searching the Literature

1. Get a feel for your topic.

1.   Consult introductory psychology texts. This will give you a brief overview of the field and key words. You may not use textbooks as references.

2. Get review articles

1.   Get review articles from:

        1 a. Edited books or chapters written for experts in the field such as Handbooks. Go to reference library area; check http://psycnet.apa.org/index.cfm?fa=browsePB.home for books published by APA When you do a subject search on databases, books will also come up.

        1 b. Review articles in journals such as *Annual Review of Psychology, Psychological Bulletin, American Psychologist, Psychological Science, Clinical Psychology Review etc.,*

        1 c. Meta-analyses are also very useful

2. Read those articles and their reference sections. Then, track down the research cited in those articles.

3. To see if the authors have done more-recent research, look them up in the author index of *Psychological Abstracts* or in the *Social Science Index* (see librarian for later).

4. Look up your topic in the subject index of *Psychological Abstracts.*

5. See what recent articles have referenced your key articles by consulting the *Social Science Citation Index* (located in the reference section of your library).

3. Get empirical articles

        Use databases *Eric*, *Psychological Abstracts* and *PsyInfo*. Use only peer reviewed published research. Do not use papers or posters presented at conferences or meetings. Do not use dissertations.

        1. Read those articles and their reference sections. Then, track down the research cited in those articles.

        2. To see if the authors have done more-recent research, look them up in the author index of *Psychological Abstracts* .

        3. See what recent articles have referenced your key articles by consulting the *Social Science Citation Index* (ask librarian) or using PsyInfo.

        4. Google author to see if she/he has a website with more information and published research. Use author's name and affiliation (printed on journal article).

Tips for Using Psyc Lit, PsychINFO, ERIC,

Problem	Possible Solution
Not finding enough references	1. Find other names for your key concept. For example, brain storm, use the thesaurus (or press key labeled F9) or consult with a reference librarian 2. Use the term "or" to look for articles that contain any of the terms you are looking for. 3. Use the stem of the term you are interested in followed by an asterisk (*). This will give you all articles that have this root word as a stem. Thus, doing teen* will get you articles that mention "teen," "teens," "teen-age," and "teenagers." 4. If you are using an author search, check the index (F5) to make sure (1) that you have the author's name spelled correctly, and (2) that the author doesn't use more than one way of presenting his or her name (with or without middle initial, etc.).
Finding too many references	1. Use the "and" command to make sure that thereference has tosatisfy several criteria before it is captured by your search. For example, you might search "death and English in la" to get only those articles that are both on death and in English. Often, you will want "and" between the predictor and criterion variables you are searching for. 2. If you find that you are getting articles that have your keyword in the abstract, but don't have anything to do with your concepts, narrow your search by making sure that you get only articles that someone else has described as pertaining to your topic. To do this, add "in de" to your key word. Thus, instead of searching for "recall," you might search for "recall in de." 3. If you find that many of the "wrong references" you get are calling up a certain term, you could add "and not __ (that irrelevant term)" to your search. Or, if the search keeps giving you articles from a journal that your library doesn't have, you could add "and not child-development in jn." Or, if you didn't want any animal research references, you could add "and not animal in po." 4. You could limit your search to only the most recent year ("and 2001 in py"). 5. If you only want literature reviews, include "and literature-review in de." If you want to exclude literature reviews, include "and not literature-review in de."

Cannot find an article	1. Click on **ARTICLE LINKER** Check Article Linker for more information
	2. **Google** the name of author with affiliation. You are looking for a web page with publications
	3. **Google** the journal name- Often times they have a free preview copy and you can get the article
	4. **Google** the name of the article and see if you can download it for free.
	5. **Email** the author (first author). In email, write that you are working on your senior undergraduate thesis and were interested in receiving a copy of their article and any related materials. Give my address in email with your name first c/o Dr. Treboux, Psychology Department, St. Joseph's College, 155 West Roe Blvd, Patchogue, NY 11772. Be sure to thank them.
	6. **See me.**