

RESEARCH WRITER'S JOURNAL ASSIGNMENT #3
SELECTING A PAPER TOPIC
BCUSP 135 (DR. MONDAL)
YOUR NAME: _____

Submission Guidelines

Enter your responses to this assignment in the spaces provided. Save the file as RWJ3_LastName_FirstName and submit it in the appropriate Catalyst Collect It dropbox, accessible at <https://catalyst.uw.edu/collectit/dropbox/sharleen/15063>, before class on Monday, 4/18/11. Assignments submitted after the due date will be marked late.

Purpose

The library exercise that you will complete for this journal assignment was designed especially for our course by Jackie Belanger and Rebecca Bliquez, the librarians you will meet at our first library session next week. It is especially important to submit the assignment on time so that the librarians and I can look over it before our library session. This assignment aims to help you in the following ways:

- 1) The concept mapping exercise provides you with a useful tool to choose a topic of interest for your research paper, to formulate research questions, and to narrow that interest enough to come up with specific search terms for finding information. The concept mapping technique, like the Threads Exercise we did in class, is a way to figure out what you want to write about and what specific questions you want to investigate.
- 2) The Boolean searching tutorial and practice will prepare you to use our library session efficiently, having already had some exposure to (and practice with!) searching for information in the library system. This practice will prepare you for our upcoming Conventions of Academic Writing worksheet in addition to helping you find information for your research paper.

Instructions

Read carefully the information in the worksheet below (scroll down to page 2). Be sure to follow all instructions and to fill out the requested answers. If you get stuck, please contact one of the librarians or me for help.

Library worksheet 2: selecting & narrowing your research topic/Boolean searching

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your librarians:

Jackie Belanger: jbelanger@uwb.edu Tel: 425-352-3467

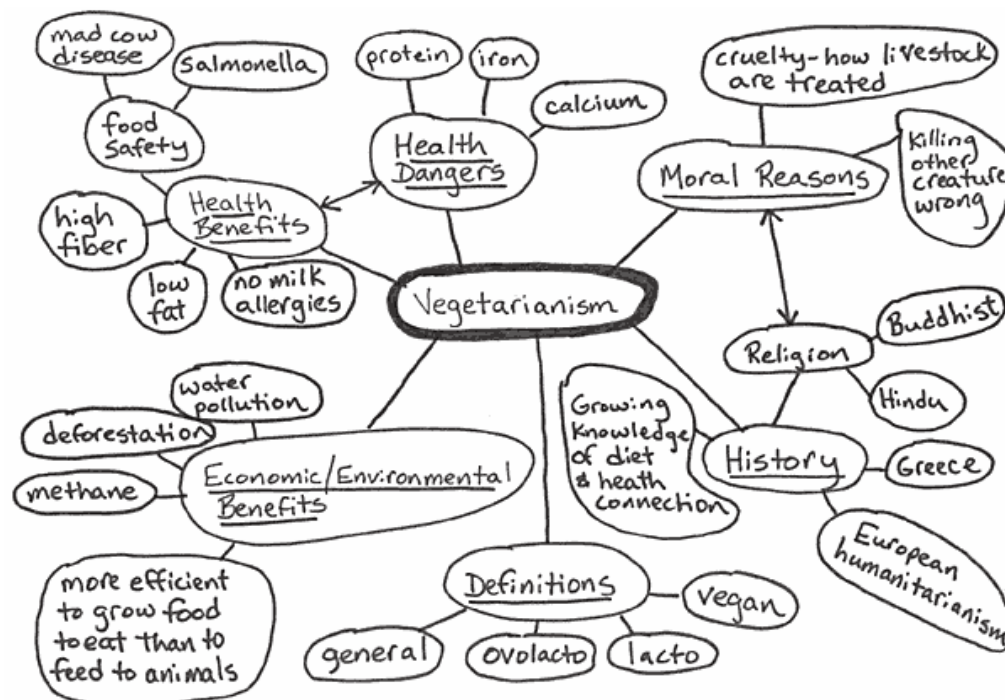
Rebecca Bliquez: rbliquez@uwb.edu Tel: 425-352-5346

Getting help: 24/7 chat reference service - <http://library.uwb.edu/askus.html>

SECTION 1: Concept Mapping

Concept mapping is a way to organize and represent knowledge visually. It can help you brainstorm ideas for your writing, summarize and organize what you already know about a topic, and examine relationships between ideas. A concept map allows you to understand complex information or ideas “at a glance”, and is a useful tool to help you find an interesting topic for your paper.

Concept maps can help writers narrow their topic from something broad like “obesity” to a more specific research question(s) such as “What are the societal influences that lead to obesity in American children, and what steps should we take toward prevention?” Here’s an example of a concept map on the broad topic of ‘vegetarianism’:



Jim Kinnie, University of Rhode Island http://www.uri.edu/library/staff_pages/kinnie/lib120/vegmap.gif

a. Your Concept Map

Get started by watching this YouTube video on concept mapping:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KhgxuNvbNrA>

Now you'll create a concept map as a way to organize the thinking you've done so far, and to brainstorm ideas about your topic. **Using the space below, start by placing your initial topic in the center** – this is the “you are here” that represents the beginning of your research.

1. Near this central topic write **subquestions and subtopics**. Around your central topic, write **important concepts, questions, issues, people, and events**. Draw lines or branches between related keywords/phrases and your topic, showing the relationship between items.

2. Next Steps – From Concept Map to Focusing your Topic:

a) Is there one part of the concept map that interests you in particular? What about this interests you?

b) Your concept map relied on what you already know and think about your topic. Now think about what you do not know and what you would like to know about your topic. Write down some of those ideas and questions to follow up on here.

c) Which specific elements seem of interest to you at this point? Please make some notes to yourself as to why these interest you.

d) What kinds of resources do you think you might want to use for your research? Do you want to find current articles from popular magazines, interviews, historical information, scholarly books and journal articles, government reports, websites (what kinds?), art works, organizations, and/or other types of information?

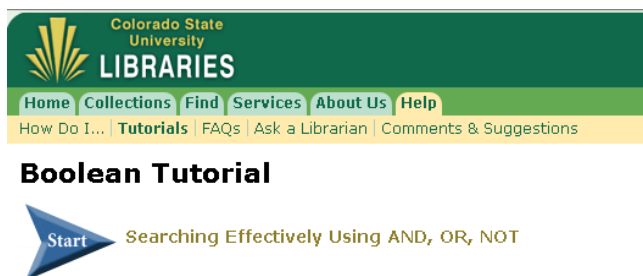
Once you've made a list of different types of sources, say a little bit about why you think these individual sources may be useful for your research.

SECTION 2: Boolean Searching Tutorial

Once you have a better idea about your topic, you'll need to start thinking about the best ways to search for information. Learning some techniques for effective searching will save you time when you're researching your assignment. We'll build on this work for the first library session, so make sure to bring a copy of this worksheet with you!

1. Go to Colorado State University Library's online Boolean Searching tutorial here:
http://lib.colostate.edu/tutorials/boolean_info.html

2. Click on the "Start" button on the web page (this is just a screenshot!) to begin the tutorial.



3. Follow the tutorial to learn how to use Boolean searching with AND, OR, and NOT (it will only take a few minutes).
4. When finished with this section, continue to the Advanced Boolean Searching tutorial:



(http://lib.colostate.edu/tutorials/booleanadv_info.html)

The Advanced Boolean Searching tutorial will show you how to build searches *combining* AND, OR, and NOT and how to use parentheses to group similar keywords for stronger searches.

SECTION 3: Practice Boolean Searching in the Catalog

Before you start there are three more search tricks you'll want to review:

- Put **quotations** around phrases (i.e. when you want to search a combination of words in a specific order) → *"electoral college"* not *electoral college*
- Use the **asterisk (*)** as a wildcard → *histor** tells the catalog or database to look for various forms of the word: history, historical, historian, etc.
- Don't worry about searching with words like 'the': for example, you can search for "Yellow Wallpaper", not "The Yellow Wallpaper".

DIRECTIONS:

- Begin at the Campus Library homepage: <http://library.uwb.edu>
- Click on the “UW Libraries Catalog” link.
- In the Keyword search box, enter the following searches and **record the number of “hits”** (results) into the boxes below. Be sure to include the “punctuation” (Boolean signals), when you type in your search.

Boolean Search:

- a) writing OR research
- b) writing AND research
- c) mental health
- d) "mental health"
- e) (writing OR research) AND psychology
- f) (writing OR research) AND psycholog*

Search Results:

- Using the results above, please answer the following questions:
 - 1) Which search gave you more results, search a) or search b)? Why?
 - 2) Which search gave you more results, search c) or search d)? Why?
 - 3) Which search gave you more results, search e) or search f)? Why?

HINT: If you click on a title in your search results it takes you to the record for the book (or movie, sound recording or other item) in the library’s catalog. Notice that in the item’s record, your search terms show up red. The red highlighting can help you see what the catalog’s search function has done with your search terms.

Write one question here that you have about Boolean searching, or about searching in general: