Welcome to SFASU and the Steen Library!

This handout is a guide for you. If at any time you have a question, please feel free to call or e-mail your Liaison Librarian—Shannon Bowman, office phone: 936-468-1528, e-mail: bowmansl1@sfasu.edu.

Interlibrary Loan (ILL)

First, we must confess to you that the Steen Library does not have everything you will ever need, in terms of books, journal articles, reports, etc. To assist you when we do not have a resource that you need, there is Interlibrary Loan (ILL).

To use this service:
- Go to the Steen Library home page.
- Click on Quick Links.
- Click on Interlibrary Loan (ILL).
- Enter your mySFA Username and Password.
  If that does not work click on Create Account.
- Put the requested information in the boxes, and click Create.

Primary and Secondary Sources

What are primary sources?

A primary source provides direct or firsthand evidence about an event, object, person, or work of art. Primary sources provide the original materials on which other research is based and enable students and other researchers to get as close as possible to what actually happened during a particular event or time period. Primary sources can be written or non-written (sound, pictures, artifacts, etc.). In scientific research, primary sources present original thinking, report on discoveries, or share new information.

Examples:
- Interviews, surveys, and fieldwork
- Government documents (reports, bills, proclamations, hearings, etc.)
- Patents
- Technical reports
- Scientific journal articles reporting experimental research results

How to search for primary sources:

1. From the library homepage, begin your search in SteenFind or you can select a specific database from the A-Z Databases.
2. Refine your search by checking the “Limit to articles from scholarly journals, including peer-reviewed” box on the right of the screen.
3. Once you have your search results, don’t forget that you are looking for articles where the author has conducted original research. A primary research article will include a literature review, methodology, population or set sample, test or measurement, a discussion of findings, and sometimes future research directions.

What are secondary sources?

Secondary sources describe, discuss, interpret, comment upon, analyze, evaluate, summarize, and process primary sources. A secondary source is generally one or more steps removed from the event or time period and is written or produced after the fact with the benefit of hindsight. On occasion, secondary sources will collect, organize, and repackage primary source information to increase usability and speed of delivery, such as an online encyclopedia.

Examples:

- Reference books, including dictionaries, encyclopedias, and atlases
- Literature reviews and review articles (e.g., movie reviews, book reviews)
- History books and other popular or scholarly books
- Works of criticism and interpretation
- Textbooks
- Indexes and abstracts

Most library databases will include secondary sources.
Researching Your Topic

Before you begin, you have to create a search strategy.

1. Put your research topic in the form of a question or statement. If it is a question, the paper will answer it. If it is a statement, the paper should support it.

2. Mark the keywords in the question or statement on your topic.

3. Use these keywords to create a search strategy to find information on your topic. Use the Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT) to combine the keywords. You could add keywords and “nest” them in parenthesis using the Boolean operator OR, if there are synonyms for a word.

As you begin the process, if you are not clear on your topic, it may help to get an overview. One of the best ways to do that is a plain Google search or search on Wikipedia. You are not to cite an Internet source or a Wikipedia page, but to get you started and begin the process—YES! Also, talk to the professors. Most of them have specific research interests; find out what they are. Once you begin to pull together materials, do not forget to check the list of references that each author uses. No one writes research articles without citing others. Be sure to use what you find to locate other good sources!

Using Abstracts to Narrow Your Selections

What is the purpose of an abstract?

An abstract presents the essential information contained in a research report, an article, a book, or other document. It allows readers to decide whether they want to read the report.

An effective abstract:

- uses one or more well-developed paragraphs, which are unified, coherent, and concise;
- uses an introduction-body-conclusion structure in which the parts of the report are discussed in order: purpose, findings, conclusions, recommendations;
- provides logical connections between material;
- adds no new information but simply summarizes the report; and
- is intelligible to a wide audience.

In recent years, various industrial activities have caused serious pollution to the environment. Due to the low operating costs and high flexibility, adsorption is considered as one of the most effective technologies for pollutant management. Agricultural waste has loose and porous structures, and contains functional groups such as the carboxyl group and hydroxyl group, so it can be invoked as biological adsorption material. Agricultural waste gets the advantages of a wide range of sources, low cost, and renewable. It has a good prospect for the comprehensive utilization of resources when used for environmental pollution control. This article summarized the current research status of agricultural waste in adsorbing pollutants, which pointed out the influencing factors of adsorption, expounded the adsorption mechanism of biological adsorption and introduced the related parameters of adsorption, proposed the application of adsorbents in engineering including adsorption in liquid and gas phases, at the same time it gave the future development prospect of agricultural waste as adsorbent.

Any questions or concerns about finding information should be directed to your Liaison Librarian:
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