Finding and Using Background Research

2. Introduction

2.1 Start

Finding & Using Background Research!

2.2 Welcome

Welcome to the *Finding & Using Background Research* tutorial!

You can listen to or view the contents of this tutorial on the left menu.

To navigate forward click the NEXT button located in the bottom right hand corner of this screen.

2.3 Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this tutorial you will be able to:

●identify the need for and value of additional information or background data

●recognize different kinds of information located in background sources

●identify different types of background sources

●identify and search selected background sources in the ASU Library collections

●identify specialized resources for subject background information

●use background information to answer and create questions

●use background information to clarify search terms

1. Background Sources

1.1 Sources Start

Now, let's look at some of the ASU Library Online Background Sources.

Click on the circle by the title to learn more about each resource.

When you click NEXT on the individual pages you will come back to this page until you have viewed them all!

When you are finished reviewing each title, click **Continue**.

1.2 Encyclopedia Britannica

The *Britannica Encyclopedia* is a well-respected & credible general encyclopedia covering all subject areas in a scholarly fashion.

It is a great starting place to define topics and gather facts for your research.

This entry on Reality TV provides a short history highlighting important shows & how they contributed to the development of reality TV programming.

1.3 GVRL

Gale Virtual Reference Library (GVRL) is a huge collection of subject encyclopedias, almanacs & specialized multidisciplinary resources.

Because of the diversity of sources you get different perspectives on your topic from multiple subject areas.

GVRL sources are credible & reliable, but check with your professor about using encyclopedia entries in your research. Many professors view encyclopedias useful only for background & not "real" research sources.

Now that you know a little about Gale, let's try searching 'reality television'

1.4 CQ Researcher

CQ Researcher is a great source for extensive information on all kinds of topics.

Topics are often current events or topics of great interest such as abortion or the death penalty.

1.5 GVRL

We retrieved 42 entries in our search of "Reality Television."

The 1st entry from the *St. James Encyclopedia of Popular Culture* is an overview of reality television.

The 2nd entry from *Business Leader Profile for Students is a biography* focusing on Mark Burnett, the creator of many reality TV programs.

Before we look at one of the entries let's look at the column on the right side. You can limit and refine your search results in several different ways by clicking on one of these options: document type, publication title or by subject.

1.6 GVRL

Now we're ready look at the 1st entry. This article defines and describes reality television and includes important publication information about the encyclopedia.

Again looking at the column on the right called "tools" you see a set of options. You can read this article online or you can email, download or print the full text. You can even download it as an MP3 file & listen to the text of the article! Another option is to highlight passages or take notes.

If you want to cite this article in a paper click on "citation tools" for examples using APA and MLA citation styles.

1.7 Sage

Sage Knowledge is a huge collection of encyclopedias, handbooks & books in one resource. Within your original search you can limit the results by clicking on the resource type.

Sage is more complex & difficult to search than GVRL, but its coverage of the social sciences is deep & extensive.

The 1st entry in the results list is from the *Encyclopedia of Race and Crime.*

As you see this encyclopedia provides a very different & potentially unique perspective on reality TV shows.

1.8 Background Sources Activity

 (Drag and Drop, 10 points, unlimited attempts permitted)

Let's review the reasons for using background sources.

Click on the description on the left and drag it to the appropriate circle.

Drag Item	Drop Target
overview of topic	Green oval 1
timeline of events	Green oval 1
identifies keywords	Green oval 1
jargon defined	Green oval 1
bibliographies of sources	Green oval 1
different perspectives	Green oval 1
quick facts	Green oval 1
identifies experts	Green oval 1
easy to find	Red oval 1
familiar with encyclopedias	Red oval 1
easy to read	Red oval 1

1.9 CQ Researcher Features

We searched reality TV and found a report from August 27, 2010.

Each issue provides an overview, background information, pro/con arguments, a chronology and a bibliography related to the topic.

1.10 CQ Researcher Strengths

One of the strengths of *CQ Researcher* is its summaries of controversial issues related to each topic it covers.

For example, in this report it is interesting to see that while most Americans see

reality TV as having a bad influence on society, it is still one of the most popular genres on TV!

1.11 Librarians

If what we have covered so far does not work for your topic, we have subject experts waiting to assist you with finding background information.

1.12 More Librarians

Librarians are happy to help you discuss your research by telephone, email, or schedule a time to meet in person. They can save you lots of time and effort!

4. Conclusion

4.1 Learning Outcomes

Now that you have completed this tutorial, you can:

●identify the need for and value of additional information or background data

●recognize different kinds of information located in background sources

●identify different types of background sources

●identify and search selected background sources in the ASU Library collections

●identify specialized resources for subject background information

●use background information to answer and create questions

●use background information to clarify search terms

4.2 Conclusion

Congratulations!

You have completed the *Finding & Using Background Research* tutorial!

Click on "Tutorials" to return to the Tutorials page or "Next" to complete a brief quiz.

5. Background Introduction

5.1 Little Pony

The Pony has it right! Our Library Is FULL of AWESOME!

Some of those awesome things are background sources!

They include resources that are familiar to most of us: encyclopedias, handbooks, almanacs & subject dictionaries

5.2 Background Research

Background research gives you direction & helps refine your research!

As you build your topic knowledge, you can decide what aspects of your topic you want to focus.

While it might seem like extra work, doing background research is really worth it!

5.3 Grumpy Research

You may be as excited about looking for background information on your topic as Grumpy Cat is about *being* the background!

But building topic knowledge with background sources allows you to see how the topic may be defined in different ways, or viewed from different perspectives.

Background sources also provide you with summaries of the significant aspects of the topic!

5.4 Timeline

Background sources allow you to put your topic in context with a timeline of important dates or events and identities of people who are considered experts or authorities on the topic.

Using background sources also helps you identify additional topic specific key terms and jargon or locate bibliographies that can lead to other sources of information.

Lastly, background sources may be invaluable in helping you focus not only your topic but also the question you will answer in your research.

5.5 Wikipedia

Where do you think you can find good background information?

Wikipedia's creators say it's purpose is to be an online collaborative encyclopedia.

As an encyclopedia it's not a bad choice for checking quick facts or dates or if you plan to use their bibliographies as a starting point but most university professors do **not** see *Wikipedia* as a credible or reliable source because it does

not meet their standards for accuracy or quality control.

Since anyone can create & contribute to the entries, the opportunity for mistakes is great!

Take a look at this! Who knew Jeremy Renner was not only an actor but a velociraptor! As you can see, *Wikipedia* is not a source to use exclusively or to cite in your research papers.

5.6 Academic Background Sources

Okay, so we looked at Wikipedia. Now, let's look at some academically acceptable sources for background information.

You may be surprised to learn that many are familiar sources. They include general and subject encyclopedias and dictionaries, handbooks, quick fact sources such as almanacs and statistical handbooks or books and book chapters. Even journal articles that provide an overview of a topic.

As university students you have used these for years, except now most are online.

5.7 Background Sources Activity

 (Drag and Drop, 10 points, unlimited attempts permitted)

Let's review what we've learned! Background resources can help you better understand your topic and fill in knowledge gaps.

Drag and drop the best resources for background information into the basket and click "submit"

Drag Item	Drop Target
Dictionaries	Picture 1

Encyclopedias	Picture 1
Handbooks	Picture 1
Books	Picture 1
Book chapters	Picture 1
Journal articles	Picture 1
Google	
Wikipedia	
Websites	
Newspapers	

6. Credits

6.1 Credits

The sources and images used in this tutorial are listed here.