



# Argument & Research Resources at the RMU Library

Papers and speeches covering current items from the news and controversial issues are favorite assignments at RMU. The following is a list of suggested steps to will help you in your library research.

## Step 1: Understand the assignment.

Although the librarians will do everything possible to help you with your assignment (except write it), they will NEVER presume to interpret a faculty member's instructions. If you do not understand what the assignment requires, ask your professor.

## Step 2: Find a topic.

If you have not been assigned a topic...Step 2 can be very difficult. Browse some to the reference sources listed in the handout, scan recent news periodicals, or talk to you professor for inspiration.

## Step 3: Get the big picture

The best way to begin researching a topic or controversy is to gain a broad, general understanding of the fundamental issues and arguments.

Try these databases:

**Britannica Online:** The full text of the Encyclopedia Britannic is available on RMU Library computers and online via the RMU eLibrary. The Britannica provides the complete text of over 73,000 encyclopedic entries on a variety of topics, including historical events.

**CQ Researcher:** As part of the CQ Library this database provides a comprehensive background and balanced analysis of current controversial topics.

**Issues and Controversies Online:** This database provides background, statistical, and pro/con information about current controversial topics.

## Step 4: Find more information

### Books

**ROBCAT:** If the issue or controversy has a long history, there may be books in the RMU collection that discuss it in detail. Search ROBCAT (the RMU Library's online catalog) to see what is available. ROBCAT is available at the library and on the Web at <http://robcat.rmu.edu>

# Periodical Articles

## Recommended Periodical Databases:

**Academic Search Premier:** This general database provides full text for more than 4,500 journals, including full text for more than 3,700 peer-reviewed titles. Try combining the issues at hand and the term *editorial* to find persuasive arguments.

**Example:** *torture and editorial*

**ProQuest:** Search ProQuest's 8000+ newspapers, magazines, and scholarly journals for articles on your topic. Many articles are available in full text. Try combining the issues at hand and the term *ethics, debate, issue, or controversy* to find relevant pro/con information.

**Example:** *torture and ethics*

## One Specific Periodical:

**Congressional Digest:** The Pro & Con Monthly: Washington, D.C.: Congressional Digest, Inc., c1922. Each issue of this magazine is dedicated to covering a specific controversial issue arising from proposed general legislation. The library has subscribed to this periodical since 1965. All issues are located in the Moon Campus Library's Periodical Department. Consult the blue pages at the back of each year's bound copy (which covers the series back to 1921) and the "Issues Update" page in the latest issue of the magazine to locate specific topics.

## Step 5: Analyze the results of your research and write!

**Step 6: Always remember that the librarians are here to assist you with your research. Please do not hesitate to ask for help.**

### Moon Campus Library Reference Desk

Phone: (412) 397-3272    I.M.: imrmulibrary    E-mail: [librarym@rmu.edu](mailto:librarym@rmu.edu)

Stop in. No appointment necessary.

### Regular Reference Hours:

Sundays: 1 PM - 9 PM; Tuesdays - Thursdays: 8:30 AM - 10 PM; Fridays: 8:30 AM - 5 PM; and Saturdays: 9 AM - 5 PM.

*Please note that hours do change during holidays, summer, and breaks.*

*Consult the RMU Library Web site at <http://www.rmu.edu/library> for more information*



**Check out the RMU Library's new IM/Text Message Reference option!**

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