

4 Easy Steps to Using the Ashford Library for Background Research

Don't know where to start with a research project? A good place to start is with some background research on your main topic. Doing a bit of reading in an encyclopedia, an almanac or another general reference source can help you understand the important people, events and terms that are associated with your topic. This can make it easier to develop your research question and to identify key terms later when you are doing research in the library's database.

Encyclopedias and other general reference works (like almanacs and dictionaries) are not scholarly sources. Generally, they are not considered acceptable sources for research papers for your classes here at Ashford. (If you have a question about whether a source is acceptable, you should always ask your instructor.) So, even though you would not use an encyclopedia article in the final version of a paper or project, encyclopedias can be a great place to get started on your research.

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Click on “Encyclopedias and Dictionaries”.

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Choose the encyclopedia or dictionary that you want from this list.

Encyclopedias, Dictionaries & Reference

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This database gives you access to hundreds of reference books—including subject encyclopedias and dictionaries-- covering every major subject. There are over 3 million entries, 200,000+ images (art, diagrams, maps and photos), and over 100,000 audio pronunciation files and sound clips.

World Book Academic

This database provides access to reference sources, such interactive maps & atlases, dictionary and encyclopedic information, as well as primary source documents.

Literary Reference Center (EBSCOhost)

This database provides access to reference sources such as *The Encyclopedia of Literature* as well as the *New Oxford English Dictionary*, and also provide access to plenty of biographical information of authors

ebrary

This is a collection of over 116,000 e-books covering all academic disciplines, including many encyclopedias and dictionaries.

International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences

This encyclopedia covers scholarship and fields that have emerged and matured since the publication of the original international edition, highlighting the expanding influence of economics in social science research. This resource features articles and bigoraphies contributed by scholars from around the world on a wide array of global topics in the social sciences.

Westlaw

This database provides access to a large amount of case law information, with *Black's Law Dictionary* being of particular importance.

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In the search box, type your topic.



If you follow these steps, you will be on your way to learning more about your topic. You will find it much easier to create a research question and identify keywords that you will need for finding those scholarly sources that you need for your final paper or project.