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.

1

Click on the "Library" tab in the classroom.



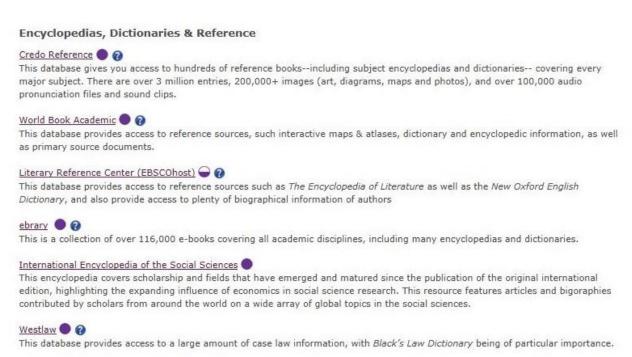
2

Click on "Encyclopedias and Dictionaries".



3

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



4

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.