

Edited by **Rachelle M Smith**

EMPORIA STATE UNIVERSITY

COMPOSITION

MANUAL

**Third
Edition**

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How to Avoid Getting Lost in the Library and Other Research Tips by Sherry Backhus and Seeta L. Mangra

While it may be easier for most of us to write a paper like Remembering Events, learning how to write a paper that requires research is essential despite its seeming difficulty. But how can you write this type of paper when doing research and using the library are foreign to you?

Below you will find a wealth of information on how to approach research, where to find and how to use the materials in the William Allen White Library (and the library itself), and pointers on what to do with all of the information once you've found it.

Research Basics

The type of information you will need depends on what type of paper you are writing—informative, argumentative, or otherwise—and on what kind of topic you are going to use. You must first be aware of the scope of your topic. Sit down and decide what keywords you are going to search under. For example, if you are writing an argumentative paper on why the prices of CDs should be lowered, you would want to include such keywords or key phrases as “recording industry,” “cost of CDs,” or “CD history.” You can use these keywords to look for articles, books, or web sites.

Also, from that list of keywords, you can decide what type of information you will need. Different types of information include facts, statistics, expert opinions, and anecdotes. For instance, it would be important to note the actual cost of making a CD, the profits made from the sales of CDs, and changes in the cost of CDs since they were first introduced. All of these numbers will be essential to your argument.

Once you have concluded what type of information you will need, you will have to go and get it. This is the step that can be intimidating for some students, especially if you are in a new school and have no idea how to find anything in the library. In the William Allen White Library (WAWL), the books are found in the six decks, whereas departments such as checkout, fines, periodicals, and reference are found on the four different floors. If you are unsure of where a department is, ask any of the library staff, who can be found on the first and second floors and in the basement area. Be sure to familiarize yourself with these areas before you go in to do your research. It can be very scary to get lost with what you're doing AND to get lost in the library

Library Researching Tips

- Start early! Begin thinking of possible topics from day one. Starting early will allow you to use the library when it's not so crowded. You have more time at the beginning of the semester than you do at the end. Also, whether you must get material through the main library or through interlibrary loan, you will have time.
- If you hate going to the library, go with a friend.
- Break down your research into small, simple steps.
- Keep all materials (notes, working bibliography, photocopies, print-outs, etc.) for your research in one notebook.
- Make a log, or list, of where you've looked and what you've looked for to keep yourself from going over the same ground several times.
- If you get stuck or can't seem to find anything, go back to where you started and rethink your strategy.
- Ask the librarians for help. They are very helpful, especially if you tell them what and where you have already been.
- Write the bibliographic information for each article you photocopy on the first page of the article. Sometimes that information will already be there (author, title of article, title of periodical, date, page number(s), and volume number for journals), but it is a good idea to write it down anyway.
- Make a working bibliography on a separate sheet of paper, listing all of the sources that you have found. Having it in one place, on one sheet of paper, is very helpful when it comes time to do your works cited.

Library Layout

Lobby — Circulation Desk:

This is where any circulating materials are checked out. Your Hornet ID Card is required for checking out any library materials. Materials that can be checked out include books from the Decks and from 4th Floor, government documents, and Media Resources. This is also where you can check out Reserve materials that your professors have put here for your use. Charge for the library copiers and reader/printers is available here.

The copiers and some reader/printers will take copier cards and give you a 25% (!) discount on each copy you make. The copy card dispenser is located on a pillar just inside the security gate. When you put a \$5.00 bill in the dispenser, it will give you a permanent card with \$4.25 of copying money. This is a great deal! Instead of paying 10 cents to copy a page you now pay 7.5 cents (and 15 cents instead of 20 cents for film or fiche copied pages.) The permanent card also allows you to add money to the card as you need it. Don't add too much because if you lose the card, you lose your money too.

— InterLibrary Loan will also be found behind the Circulation Desk. If WAWL does not own a book or magazine issue that you need, you can fill out a form either on paper or electronically (go to <http://library.emporia.edu> and click on Services, then InterLibrary Loan, then ILL Request Form), and WAWL will obtain the book or article for you. This process can take time, so request it at least two (2) weeks before you will be writing your paper. You will be notified when it arrives and can pick it up at the same Circulation Desk.

— Media Resources:

Our library has many videos, audio recordings, CDs, DVDs, etc. that can be checked out or viewed here for your research or pleasure. Remember to bring your Hornet ID Card!

1st Floor (down one flight from the Lobby)

— Periodicals Department:

Recent years of bound journals are available on the shelves in alphabetical order, as well as periodicals and government documents on microfilm and microfiche. You will find print indexes such as Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature on the index tables as you walk in. You will find copiers for paper and reader/printers for film or fiche on this same floor. Remember that change is available on the lobby floor.

— Special Collections:

Around the corner and down the hall you can find the special collections of the William Allen White Room, which houses some personal papers and items from Emporia's favorite son and the Mary White Room. You should explore the library near the beginning of your academic career.

2nd Floor (up one flight from the Lobby)

— Reference:

This is where you Ask Your Questions. Reference tools, both print and electronic, can be found here. The **Reference Desk** is the place to find answers to questions about how to use the Kellogg online catalog, the dictionaries, literary criticism, and the dozens and dozens of quality electronic databases you are able to use as ESU students. The reference librarians are there to help you.

— ESOL Collection:

Just off the end of the 3rd Deck you will find this collection of books, many of them for children, in languages other than English.

3rd Floor

— Documents:

WAWL is a depository for Kansas and United States government documents. The third floor contains most of the government periodicals, pamphlets, laws, statistics and many other materials published by our government. You will need to ask your questions downstairs at the Reference Desk, where they will be happy to give you the help you need.

4th Floor

This is the top floor of WAWL. It contains circulating books in the call number ranges of 700 - 799, music scores, 800 - 899, and the fiction collection (call numbers beginning with F).

Decks -- The WAWL decks are where most of the circulating books can be found.

1st Deck -- Just off the bottom floor's Periodicals area you will find the older years of periodical titles.

2nd Deck -- The library has an excellent collection of children's books. This deck contains most of the children's books that have been purchased and donated over many years. You will also find all of the theses on this deck.

3rd Deck -- Deck three is located just off the Reference Room (2nd Floor) and contains older reference tools and the beginning of the regular Dewey Decimal Classification numbered books 001 - 329. General subjects found here include computer science, journalism, psychology, and political science.

4th Deck -- Here you will find the books with call numbers from 330 - 499. Subject areas will include social services, education, language, and folklore.

5th Deck -- The fifth deck contains books numbered 500 - 699. Some topics found here are the natural sciences (such as botany, biology, and ornithology) and the applied sciences (such as medicine, engineering, and agriculture).

6th Deck -- The call numbers found on this deck are 900 - 999. Some subjects found here are travel, history, geography, and biography. This top deck will also give you access to the 4th Floor (see above).

While Researching

Now that you've gotten familiar with WAWL, there are some things you will want to remember while you are doing your research.

- Keep a research log or a running works cited page while you are doing your research.

Keep track of everything from which you are going to use information. It can be frustrating when you sit down to type your works cited page only to discover you've forgotten the author's name or the publication date.

- When you find the perfect resource, make sure you get it early. If you wait, there is a chance someone else is doing the same topic as you, and you may find the resource checked out.
- Keep everything that you are going to use for your paper in one place. If you have the printout from an electronic database in one place and your notes on it in another, chances are you'll get confused when you sit down to write your paper.
- Split up your research into smaller tasks. The smaller the sections, the more manageable your research will be.
- Ask people for help. The reference desk and the rest of the library staff are there to help you. If you can't find something or are unsure how to use library equipment (the microfilm machines, for instance), ask them. It's best to ask for help rather than to miss out on what might be exactly what you need.
- There is nothing wrong with not wanting to ask for help; many of us are afraid of looking dumb. This is common for all of us when we enter unfamiliar surroundings. A way to avoid this is to ask a friend who has been to the library to show you around.
- Choose times that you know you will not be hurried. Research takes time, and rushing it may cause you to stop before you have adequately completed the process.
- Pay attention to the library itself. You may be surprised to see a sign here or there pointing you in the direction you need. Also, be aware that the library's resources and the locations of those resources change almost every semester.
- The most important thing about researching is to use only what you need.
- Sometimes students over- or under-research and find themselves in the predicament of having too much or not enough information. A way to avoid this is to make sure that your topic is neither too broad nor too narrow. Ask your instructor if your topic has just the right scope.

Reference and Databases

What follows is a partial list of resources found through WAWL's home page (<http://library.emporia.edu>) or in the Reference Room (2nd Floor).

Encyclopedias

What they are: These research tools, in print or electronic form, contain alphabetical listings of famous people, historical events, cultures, and other general information. They are a great way to begin researching a subject. You can find a lot of information on general topics which can help you pinpoint a specific topic for a paper.

Where they are: You will find most encyclopedias between the numbers 000 - 100 in the Reference Room.

Academic American Encyclopedia, Encyclopedia Americana,
Encyclopedia Britannica, The Random House Encyclopedia,
The World Book Encyclopedia

Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature

What it is: This set is the old standby for finding articles on a particular subject. The library owns every year up through 2000. The good part is that they are easy to use. The bad part is that you need to look your subject up in several different volumes (years) to find a good selection of articles.

Where it is: You will find this title on the first Index Table in the Periodicals Room.

Statistics

What they are: Books containing statistics compiled from government resources.

Where they are: In the Reference Room by their call numbers.

Statistical Abstract of the United States

This book contains a huge number of statistics put together from thousands of federal government agency reports. The call number is R 317.3 St 291.

Kansas Statistical Abstract

This book is also packed with information specifically concerning Kansas. You will find it at call number R 317.3 K13.

Facts on File

What it is: Facts on File provides factual, detailed and up-to-date information on current events for any particular year. WAWL has all years back to 1941. It is updated weekly and covers the news on sports, medical advances, education, the arts, and much more. Use the instructions on the first two pages of the yellow section at the end to help you find your topic.

Where it is: This set is located in the Reference Room at call number R 090.82 F119.

Electronic Resources

WAWL has many resources for your use. The online catalog, the **Kellogg Catalog**, can be found by clicking on the large icon at the top left of the Library's web page (<http://library.emporia.edu>). Here you can discover what books, magazines, journals, videos, CDs, etc. the Library owns and where in the Library to find them. You can also use the Kellogg Catalog to find out what books you have checked out and renew them online!

Electronic Databases

What they are: As long as you are a student and have access to ESU's Internet@Home or another Internet service provider, these databases can be used from your home computer. However, if you do have problems, you can call the Reference Desk at 341-5207. WAW Library has over 80 general and specific databases containing quality articles (many in full-text) for your use while you are at Emporia State University. These will help you find good, reliable articles for your research papers. Use these databases instead of your browser's search engine and you will have much happier professors!

Where they are: To access, go to <http://library.emporia.edu> and click on Resources. Then choose either the Alphabetical List or Subject List and choose the specific database you wish to use. You will need to read a bit about how to use each database's search screens, but with a little practice, you will be able to retrieve the majority of articles you will need to write your papers!

Expanded Academic ASAP (InfoTrac)

Here you will find over 6,300,000 articles from magazines, both popular and scholarly, going all the way back to 1980. Many of these articles are available electronically in full-text. The database is usually updated daily, so you have articles from 20 years ago and very current information available to you. Each database has help in searching techniques. Look for the help or tips "button" for instruction.

Periodical Abstracts (OCLC FirstSearch)

This database offers more than 3,300,000 articles from over 2,000 sources. It searches titles from 1987 to present, updating the records weekly. Again, many of these articles are available in full-text for your reading and printing pleasure.

Academic Universe (Lexis-Nexis)

There are four subsections to this database. Use the NEWS and then the General News selections to retrieve full-text articles from major United States newspapers and some periodicals. You will find articles from 1980 to present. There are good tips on how to search on

the screen below the search boxes.

A final word about database offerings at WAWL:

We have only listed three of the many, many databases available to you. There are dozens of specialized databases that might work even better for a specific topic. Some searching tools you will find on the Library's web site (<http://library.emporia.edu>) are: Arts and Humanities Search, Business and Industry, Education Fulltext, and Health Reference Center - Academic. Be sure to scan the long list under Resources then Subject List to get the complete picture!

Additional Campus Resources

In addition to the WAWL, there are several other resource centers on campus that may have exactly what you need. In Visser Hall, there is the **Resource (Education) Center** that offers students and faculty information concerning education. Not too far away from that is the **Student Life and Counseling Center**, which is found in Morse Hall. Students can obtain both personal and career counseling from the center. Finally, there is the **Women's Resource Center** in the Memorial Union. Here you can find books and magazines concerning women's issues such as sexuality, sex crimes, and gender. For a listing of the other centers on campus, see the current Student Directory.

Keep in mind that Emporia State University is not the only place to find information. There is the Emporia Public Library, and there are numerous public and university libraries in the surrounding areas. If you are unsure of where to start, ask your instructor.

Research takes a lot of concentration and time, but with the right attitude and approach, it can become much easier. The keys to successful research are setting aside an adequate amount of time, being prepared, and utilizing only the sources you need.

"Library Researching Tips" is taken directly from Jennifer D. Setter's "Looking Beyond the Reader's Guide: Possibilities of Research," which can be found in previous editions of the Emporia State University Composition Manual.