

Researching your essay effectively

The stages of an essay

- Understanding your question
- Searching for sources
- Assessing the sources
- Identifying which references to use
- Assembling your argument
- Writing your essay
- Adding your references
- Proof-reading your essay

Understanding your question

- Understand your topic
- Define it further
- Scan the literature

Women's experience of education in the 19th century – where?

Searching for sources

- Suggested readings – ORLO, paper reading lists, Canvas, tutorial discussions, lecture handouts
- SOLO
- Bibliographies and citations
- Databases – more advanced searching
- Google (Scholar) – scanning the literature

ORLO (Oxford Reading Lists Online)

<http://readinglists.bodleian.ox.ac.uk>

Guide to using ORLO: <https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/collections-and-resources/reading-lists>

Libraries

- College library (<https://library.some.ox.ac.uk>)
- Bodleian and departmental libraries (<https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/libraries>)
- Online library (SOLO)

SOLO (Search Oxford Libraries Online)

<https://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/>

Guide to searching SOLO: <https://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/solo/help>

Searching online – top tips

- Search well and search once
- Use the same search strategy in multiple places – and keep a record of it
- Sign in and save searches
- Bookmark/add to favourites relevant sources
- Download papers *when* you see them
- Keep a record of everything that may be useful
- Export records in formats where you can use them again
- Email searches to yourself

Using libraries

Your college library:

- **Borrowing** – as many items as you want for one term
- **Recalling** – request books on loan using the online form
- **Renewing** – online through your SOLO account
- **Opening hours** – 24/7 with card
- **Rules and regs** – no noise, no food, drinks in a spill-proof cup, only Somerville college members
- **Further help** – staffed Mon-Fri, 9.00am-5.00pm

Assessing the sources

- C – currency
- R – relevance
- A – authority
- A – accuracy
- P – purpose

For a more detailed explanation of the CRAAP test see:

<https://library.csuchico.edu/sites/default/files/craap-test.pdf>

Citing your sources

Citation styles and guides

- APA, Chicago, MLA, Harvard
- Purdue OWL <https://owl.purdue.edu/>

Tools to help you cite

- Endnote (<https://web.endnote.com/>) (free from the University)
- Mendeley (<https://www.mendeley.com/>) (login with SSO)
- Zotero (<https://www.zotero.org/>)

A guide to managing your references: <https://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/reference-management>

Further help

Contact the library team on library@some.ox.ac.uk

or

visit the library during staffed hours
Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm