

**COMP 101 – Donna Smith-Raymond**  
**Fall 2009**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR THE LIBRARY SESSIONS:**

- Become aware of the variety of **formats** in which information is presented and the benefits and drawbacks of each (books, articles, encyclopedias, born-digital web, audio-visual...)
- Become aware of the variety of **search tools** available for locating information in the various formats (catalogs, indexes, web search engines, other)
- **Practice** basic searches for and use of the following formats:
  - specialized encyclopedias (print and electronic)
  - newspaper (print/electronic and microfilm)
  - books
  - periodical articles, both “popular” and “scholarly”
- Begin to investigate the “**value**” of **information** to various users in various venues (i.e. why do your faculty require or prohibit certain kinds of information/formats?)
- Begin to understand the ramifications of **information as a commercial commodity**
  - publishers and copyright
  - free vs. fee access to material through the web
  - why accessing information can be complex
- Become familiar with the elements of the **Research Process**:
  1. Background research and Topic Analysis
  2. Resource Types
  3. Search-tool selection and searching skills
  4. If necessary, physically locating material identified through the search tool
- Understand that the point of this assignment is to learn the process, not to fill in the blanks.

**BACKGROUND RESEARCH**

*Specialized encyclopedias:*

Go to the reference stacks, and using the call letter(s) for your major (list it here, please \_\_\_\_\_), browse the reference collection in your subject area. Find a specialized encyclopedia that interests you. Choose one that contains references listed at the end of each entry and bring it back to the classroom.

Complete Title of the Encyclopedia: \_\_\_\_\_

Complete Call Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Go to the library home page and click on the subject box for your discipline. Look at the section of the page for “reference”. What is the name of one of the online encyclopedias? (Not all subject areas have one – raise your hand and ask for help if there are none listed.)

Name of online encyclopedia \_\_\_\_\_

Select an entry from either the print or electronic encyclopedia that looks interesting to you. **Be sure**, however, that the entry you pick has a rich list of references at the end of the entry as you will use the citations listed next. Cite your encyclopedia entry here:

List two book or book chapter citations and two article citations from your encyclopedia entry in the appropriate boxes below and then search as described to determine if we own or have access to them.

*Books or Book Chapters:*

Go to the library catalog (BearCat) and search using the title and/or author (you may need to use the advanced search screen). If the citation is for a book chapter, be sure that you are searching using the information for the BOOK, not the CHAPTER!

| Citation | Is this a complete book, or is it a chapter? (circle one) | Does SUNY Potsdam own this? (circle one) | If Yes, give the location, call number, and circulation status |
|----------|---|--|--|
|          | Book      Chapter   | Yes      No                              |  |
|          | Book      Chapter   | Yes      No                              |  |

*Articles:*

From the library home page, select “periodical title search”. Search for the title of the PERIODICAL (not the article!). See if we have access for the date of the article you want.

| Citation | Does SUNY Potsdam “own” or have access to this? | If Yes, give the name of the service through which it is available (there may be more than one) and the call number if we have it in print | If Yes, now click through to one of the services and search using the article title. In what format was the article available? (circle) |
|----------|---|--|---|
|          | Yes      No                                     |  | PDF - “photocopy” of article<br>Text only – article as web page<br>Text & graphics  |
|          | Yes      No                                     |  | PDF<br>Text only<br>Text & graphics   |

## FINDING INFORMATION ON A TOPIC

In a real situation, you evaluate your information need (even though you may not even be aware of doing so) to determine the importance of the following factors:

- currency
- depth
- breadth
- authority
- need for a particular format (may be required by an assignment)
- probability that your information will be found with a given search tool

Such an evaluation helps determine which search tool will be most likely to have what you need. For this assignment, **select a significant event from between 1930 and 1980**. It may be anything, but you will have the most success if you choose something that occurred on a specific date or within a small time frame (say, a week or maybe a month). For example, don't pick World War II, but you could choose to do the invasion of Normandy (except you can't, because it's the example). You may select a sporting event, a political event, a pop-culture event – anything big and newsworthy.

List your topic here: \_\_\_\_\_

Did you choose something from your own knowledge or did you need to do a little looking around for a topic?

Own knowledge

looking around

If you looked around, where did you look? What search tools or sources did you consult?

Find out the date(s) of your events: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you find out the date(s) and from what source did you take the information?

We will use this topic to locate both “historical” information from that time, and we will also see what we can find that has been written about it more recently.

*Newspapers:*

Go to the “newspaper search” section of the library’s web site (its one of the choices under “find articles” on the maroon menu bar). Write down here what you see about your access to the New York Times from 1851 to today (hint – it varies across time). You will need to scroll down and look at more than one area to get a complete answer.

Using this information, turn in an actual copy of an article (you may print/copy only the headline and first several paragraphs, but must have more than just a citation) that is the first report in the New York Times of your event. Hint – you may need an actual dime to compete this task.

Now click the link for the *Northern New York Historical Newspapers*. Select one that covers the timing of your event and search for it. Print out and turn in an article on your event from one of the papers.