

Many Types of Resources!

Primary vs. Secondary Sources

Not all information is the same! Make sure you know which type of source you are using.

- **Primary Sources** are a “first-hand account” of information. Examples of primary sources include letters, interviews, original research studies, and government reports.
- **Secondary Sources** are an interpretation of primary sources: they take information and reformat it, comment on it, etc. Secondary sources can be a good place to find information, but you often lose the context or “big picture” of the original report.

Types of Sources

You can use different kinds of resources for different kinds of information:

- **Reference Books:** do not leave the library and are a good place to find background information or an overview of your topic. Examples include [An Encyclopedia of Language](#) and [The Statistical Abstract of the United States](#).
- **Circulating Books:** these books go into greater depth on a topic. It takes time to publish a book, so books are not a good place to find very current information.
- **Periodical Articles:** periodical articles provide in-depth information and are typically very current, but periodicals vary a lot so recognize what type of periodical you are using. See your [Periodical Comparison Chart](#) for more information.
- **Electronic Sources:** these can vary from websites to articles published in online journals. Electronic sources are typically very current. Generally speaking, information that you find on the web is less trustworthy. Use a periodical database to find information instead!

Choosing the Right Database

This library subscribes to several databases (collections of articles), many with full-text articles.

- **EBSCOhost:** EBSCOhost is a large, general database that is divided into sub-databases. EBSCOhost contains a large number of scholarly publications.
- **ProQuest:** ProQuest is a large, general database. ProQuest’s strengths include a strong newspaper, business and technology collection. ProQuest also contains scholarly works.
- **Ethnic NewsWatch:** Ethnic NewsWatch provides information from small, community, and ethnic presses. There are no mainstream publications in this database, but it is a good place to look for information with a different perspective.
- **PubMed:** PubMed over 14 million citations for biomedical articles dating back to the 1950’s. Common uses of PubMed include retrieving citations and abstracts to clinical articles; investigating for therapies and prognosis; and searching for clinical trial information.