

Which resources can I use?

Introduction

There are many different types of information sources. Each source type has different characteristics, and you may need to use a combination of them in order to answer your assignment question.

Reference materials

Sometimes it can be helpful to start by doing some background research. Dictionaries and encyclopaedias are a useful source, because they can help you to find definitions of key terms and give you short summaries of important concepts. Be wary of using online reference websites such as Wikipedia, which may not contain reliable information.

[Credo Reference](#) is an online database of dictionaries, encyclopedias and other reference materials. Credo Reference provides useful concept maps, which allow you to look at all the key areas of your topic, and find out more about them. This can help you to plan and structure your assignment.

Textbooks

Textbooks are a key information source for many different types of assignment. On your BREQ unit, you will find a link to your reading list, which contains recommended textbooks and other reading. Textbooks can be particularly useful to read around key theories in your subject area. Remember though to broaden your reading beyond your reading list. The library has thousands of books, both hard copy and ebooks, and you can find them on the [library catalogue](#). Although textbooks are a good source of information, they have one major weakness: they can become out of date very quickly. If you are looking for very recent information, other sources may be more appropriate.

News sources

Newspapers are very good sources for keep up-to-date with the latest information, but they may not be very reliable. Be cautious when using news sources, as they may not be of sufficient depth, reliability or quality to be used in your assignment.

You can access newspapers in [Discover](#) by filtering to the news material type. Or you can use a specialist database such as [Newsbank](#).

News sources

Journals are publications that are published at regular intervals, for example monthly or quarterly, and contain short articles on particular topics. The most effective way to search for journal articles is to use a research database. Journals usually focus on a particular field or subject area, so they contain specific information and may not be very useful if you do not know much about the topic yet. The publication process for journal articles is usually much quicker than for textbooks, so journal articles are a good source to use if you want to find good quality, current information. Peer-reviewed journals contain articles that have been scrutinised by experts in the field before being accepted for publication. This means that the articles have gone through a quality-control process, unlike what you will find in newspapers and magazines. You can limit to peer-reviewed articles in [Discover](#) using the filter options. You will also find recommended specialist research databases for your course in your [subject guide](#).

The Internet

The Internet is a great resource and really convenient to use, but you need to choose your sources with care when you are researching for an academic assignment. Make sure that the websites you choose are trustworthy, and of academic quality. See our guide on [how to evaluate a source](#) for more help.

Further information

The Learning Resources Study Hub provides a range of opportunities (such as workshops and drop-ins) for you to enhance your academic skills. For more information visit:

lrweb.beds.ac.uk/studyhub