Researching a Topic Worksheet

1. Write down your broad topic idea:

   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

2. List some of the aspects of your topic you might want to investigate:

   Main topic: ________________________________________________
   
   ▪ Subtopic: ________________________________________________
   ▪ Subtopic: ________________________________________________
   ▪ Subtopic: ________________________________________________

3. List possible questions about your topic that you might wish to answer through your research:

   ▪ Who? __________________________________________________
   ▪ What? __________________________________________________
   ▪ Where? _________________________________________________
   ▪ Why? __________________________________________________
   ▪ When? _________________________________________________
   ▪ How? __________________________________________________

4. Draft a possible thesis or problem statement: __________________________

   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

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5. Considering your thesis or problem statement, list as many terms as you can think of which might be useful in a subject or keyword search for materials.

____________________     ___________________     ___________________
____________________     ___________________     ___________________
____________________     ___________________     ___________________
____________________     ___________________     ___________________

6. Search CENTRA, CMU’s online catalog, to see if you can locate a citation that relates to your topic (http://catalog.lib.cmich.edu/).

Subject(s) searched: ____________________________

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Suggested subject headings: ____________________________

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7. Select an appropriate database from the list of databases by subject on the library web site (http://libguides.cmich.edu/gcls/guidehome). Use the subject headings identified through your initial search to look for articles that relate to your topic. Note other useful subject headings that you identify. Continue to revise your search terms as you use different databases to conduct your research.

If you need assistance, please contact a librarian: http://gcls.cmich.edu/reference

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