

## Researching for the task

The foundation for all good writing in your assignments is your research and reading. You have [scoped your research](#) and understand something of what you need to find, and the format in which you have been asked to present your response.

Your response is assessed on your demonstrated ability to think logically and present a well-reasoned discussion or argument supported by sound sources from the literature. The essay or report you submit for assessment is the end result of your reading and thinking about the topic.

In order to develop and present a convincing response, you will need to consider the right type of information. To do so, you will need to know where to find this information.

### What information do I need?

Consider what you need to find and where this information is likely to be found. Academic research at a tertiary level requires more than just using your textbook. You may need to access a range of academic, professional, industry and public resources.

You may need...

Type of information	Types of resources	Where to find this information
introductory and background material	print or electronic books are a good starting point	use the <a href="#">Search</a> discovery system
developments and specific information in a field	journal articles from academic or professional journals	use <a href="#">library databases</a> to <a href="#">find journal articles</a> and other resources such as conference papers
information on particular software or programming languages	books and product-specific websites	places to start for programming languages include the Wikipedia pages for specific <a href="#">programming languages</a> , and The Open Directory Projects listings of <a href="#">programming language comparisons and reviews</a> and <a href="#">programming language directories</a> For software, refer to the manufacturer's or distributor's web page, review sites, and magazine reviews
information on a new product	manufacturer's website, trade	one place to start is the Open

	magazines or review websites	Directory Project's listings of <a href="#">hardware review websites</a> and <a href="#">hardware retailers</a> . Be wary of <a href="#">fake review websites</a>
current issues	news sources, trade magazines	the Library provides searchable access to a range of print and video <a href="#">news sources</a>
policies and guidelines	government sources and professional bodies	you can use more advanced features of Google to <a href="#">look for government reports</a> (use the same principles to search the websites of specific professional bodies) or find other <a href="#">government documents</a> directly on Government websites
industry and commercial information	industry profiles and reports	the Library provides access to a number of <a href="#">industry profiles and reports</a>

The library's databases are good places to start finding quality journal articles and other academic material for your assignments.

[Library databases](#) provide gateways to discipline-specific academic literature. Monash University Library selects and pays for access to a large range of sources relevant to the various faculties. As a student, you are encouraged to make use of these high-quality resources.

Resources of particular interest to IT students can be found in:

- [Computer science](#)
- [Information technology](#)
- [Information management](#)

The database listings above are divided into Key resources, useful sources with a wide coverage of a particular discipline, and Other resources, additional material of relevance to specific topics or useful reference material.

### How do I get started?

Be strategic about building your skills to make sure you use your time effectively.

You will find it helpful to spend several minutes reviewing the Library's tutorial on [developing a search strategy](#).

The [Library's Information Technology Library Guide](#) has a wide range of useful [advice and resources for getting started](#) and [searching databases effectively](#).

If you don't get the results you are looking for, this may indicate you need to change your search strategy - you may need to identify different or additional key words, or select a different database or source for finding your information.

If after searching for some time you are not able to find the material that you need, [ask for advice from the Library](#).

### How do I choose the best resources for my topic?

When researching for assignments, you will often need to look for relevant information in [academic sources](#). You will need to [evaluate](#) your sources to see that they are not only appropriate to your assignment, but of sufficient quality for use in your assignment.

However, you may also need to look at other non-academic resources (trade magazines, commercial websites, etc.). In these cases it is exceptionally important to [read critically](#). The Library's [web evaluation tutorial](#) has some useful advice for evaluating material for your assignments, as does the [Quick study guide on evaluating web pages](#). A lot of the suggestions noted in these documents can also be applied to resources other than web pages.

### How much information do I need?

Assignments often specify the number of and type of references required. If the task specifies this, be guided by the assessment specifications. If the number and type of references have not been specified, consider the word limit, the extent of the research required and whether your references support the argument you have developed for your assignment. You would expect that the reference list for a 3,000 research essay would be more extensive than that for a 1,500 word report. A good strategy is to read some of what appear to be the most relevant/useful articles and then decide whether you need further references. Don't try to incorporate all the references you find.

### Why can't I just use general search engines such as Google?

Google is a useful search engine, but much of what it finds is targeted at consumers rather than IT professionals, and the material it links to may not be academically rigorous (written and reviewed by qualified practitioners in a discipline, referenced with sources that substantiate the information provided). However, Google is good for finding up-to-date product information, [finding government information and publications](#) and finding academic working papers.

Search engines like Google can only index publicly available material, and a lot of useful academic material (e-books, journal articles, conference papers, etc) can only be found in subscriber/commercial password-protected sources.

Using [the Library's Google Scholar link](#) provides access to some of the full text material included in the databases to which the Library subscribes. [Google Scholar](#) is useful for restricting results to more academic material, but still does not cover all the academic literature.

[Need more help?](#)