1.What is a Research Paper?

- A research paper presents the results of your investigations on a selected topic. Based on your own thoughts and the facts and ideas you have gathered from a variety of sources, a research paper is a creation that is uniquely yours, formatted according to a particular research style (e.g. MLA Style – Modern Language Association).

- Writing a research paper is an essential aspect of academics life. Many students will continue to do research throughout their careers, which is one of the reasons this topic is so important. With diligence, organization, practice, a willingness to learn (and to make mistakes!), and, perhaps most important of all, patience, a student will find that she can achieve great things through her research and writing :)

- "Research paper" is more than the sum of your sources, more than a collection of different pieces of information about a topic, and more than a review of the literature in a field. A research paper analyzes a perspective or argues a point. Regardless of the type of research paper you are writing, your finished research paper should present your own thinking backed up by others' ideas and information.

- A research paper is an expanded essay that presents your own interpretation or evaluation or argument. When you write an essay, you use everything that you personally know and have thought about a subject. When you write a research paper you build upon what you know about the subject and make a deliberate attempt to find out what experts know. A research paper involves surveying a field of knowledge in order to find the best possible information in that field.

Literature Review:

- A review of the literature in a field requires you to research information and then summarize and paraphrase. *The purpose of a review is to show that you can find and understand the important professional literature in a particular field of study.*

- A literature review differs from a research paper. A research paper adds another step to the finding, understanding, and rewording of the information that you do in a literature review. A research paper adds the step of combining the information and developing your own insight or analysis or argument on a topic or issue that the information presents.

Analysis in Research Papers:

- To analyze means to break a topic or concept down into its parts in order to inspect and understand it, and to restructure those parts in a way that makes sense to you.

- In an analytical research paper, you do research to become an expert on a topic so that you can restructure and present the parts of the topic from your own perspective. For example, you could analyze the role of the mother in the ancient Egyptian family. You could break down that topic into its parts--the mother's duties in the family, social status, and expected role in the larger society--and research those parts in order to present your general perspective and conclusion about the mother's role.

Argument in Research Papers:

- An argumentative research paper needs to support your stand on an issue. An argumentative research paper is <u>analytical</u>, but it uses information as evidence to support its point, much as a lawyer uses evidence to make his case.

2. What Does a Research Paper Look Like?

RESEARCH PAPER

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3. Choosing a Strong Research Topic: Preliminary Research

What is a Strong Topic?

- Select a topic that you really enjoy working with.

- To make your project a success, you'll have to ensure that the topic is strong, as well as enjoyable.

What You Can Handle:

- Some topics are hard to handle because they are too large, or *broad.* "The American Revolution" is an example of such a topic.

- Another problem that you may face is that you may find that the research doesn't support your thesis. This is a common frustration for professors who publish a lot. Don't stick with an idea if you see lots of evidence that refutes it!

- To avoid those pitfalls, it is important to select more than one topic from the start. Find three or four topics that interest you, then, go to the library or an Internet-connected computer at home and conduct a preliminary search of each topic.

Preliminary Research:

- Determine which project idea can be supported with plenty of published material. This way, you will be able to select a final topic that is both interesting and feasible.

- Choose a topic and do a basic computer search. Take note of the **types** of sources that appear for each topic. For instance, you may come up with fifty web pages that concern your topic, but no books

or articles! This is not a good result! You need to use a variety of sources, to include articles, books, and encyclopedia references.

- If you find a topic that's widely researched and seems to be available in a number of books and journals, make sure those are books and journals that you can use. For instance, you may find several articles—but then you realize later that they're all published in another language or maybe you have to pay for the full text of that article (i.e. the complete article).

1- The first step of any research paper is for the student to **understand the assignment**.
2- Choosing the topic that is right for you is crucial.

4. Sources of Information

Evaluating Information Sources
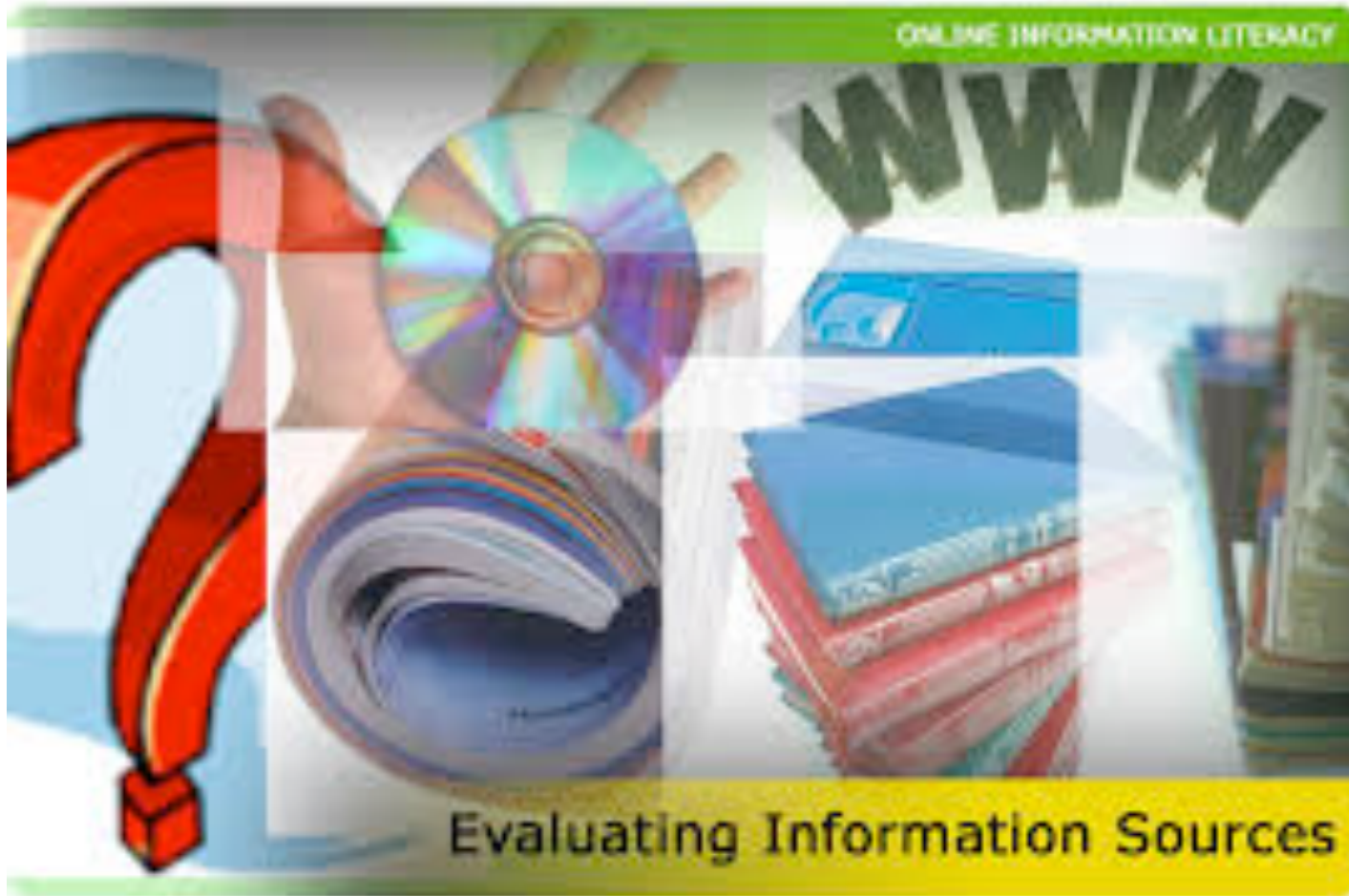
The Library Catalog:

- You could start with a library catalog (found in a library or online) which includes a list of all the books in your library. **You can search the library catalog in three ways:** by subject, title, or author. A subject search shows the titles of books on your topic. To do a subject search, type in your topic. Then click on "subject." You will get a list of all the books in the library on your topic, including the title, author, and call number for each book. Then the catalog shows the name of the publisher, the place and date the book was published, whether or not the book is available, the call number, and where in the library it is located.

KSU Online catalog: http://catalog.library.ksu.edu.sa/uhtbin/cgisirsi/swpy0LoLjq/CENTRAL/153270065/60/502/X

The Periodical Index:

- A periodical is a magazine. It's called a periodical because it is published *periodically*—every week or every month. You can find a lot of useful information in periodicals.

- Information in periodicals is often more up-to-date than what you find in many books. To locate articles on your topic, do a subject search in a printed index (in the library) called the *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature,* or you can use an online database like EBSCOHost to find full-text articles: http://search.ebscohost.com/

More Sources:
Other sources can add up-to-the-minute information to your research, including news-paper articles, articles on the Internet, and a variety of non-print sources. You can also use the Internet to find

newspaper articles. To get to major newspaper Web sites, type in the name of the newspaper—*The New York Times,* for example—instead of a keyword.

For example:

MagPortal A search engine that will allow you to search for free online magazine articles on a wide range of topics: http://www.magportal.com/

TV and Radio:

Check television and radio listings for programs about your topic. Educational stations, such as the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) and National Public Radio (NPR), are your best bet. If you listen to some programs as part of your research, make *a note of the name of the program, the station, and the date and time of the broadcast.*

Personal Interviews:
 Let's say your topic is "Dog Communication," your vet or your dog's obedience-school teacher may very well be an expert. If you plan to do an interview, save it for last. Before you've completed your research, you may not know what questions to ask. When you have all the information you can find from print and non-print sources, you can use the interview to answer questions you still have. You also can ask your expert to express an opinion about information you've found in other sources.

Searching with a Search Engine:
- Search engines maintain an incredibly large number of sites in their archives, so you must limit your search terms in order to avoid becoming overwhelmed by an unmanageable number of responses.

- Typing in a general term such as "education" or "Shakespeare" will bring back far too many results, but by narrowing your topic, you can get the kind (and amount) of information that you need. Example: Go to Google (a search engine) ➜ Type in a general term ("education") ➜ Add modifiers to further define and narrow your topic ("rural education Indiana") ➜ Be as specific as you can ("rural education Indiana elementary school") ➜ Submit your search.

Search Engine and Web Directory List (Note: This list is to be read, but not memorized for the exam)
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Resources to Search the Invisible Web:

- The invisible web includes many types of online resources that normally cannot be found using regular search engines. *The listings on page 32-33 can help you access these resourc*es.

Evaluating Sources:

- Evaluating sources of information that you are considering using in your writing is an important step in any research activity.

- You will also be evaluating sources as you search for information. You will need to make decisions about what to search for, where to look, and once you've found material on your topic, if it is a valid or useful source for your writing. One way to judge a Web site is to look at its address. For example, an address ending in ".edu" means the site is connected to a college, university, or other school. (The letters edu stand for "education.") Such addresses often contain good information.

5. Google Book Search + EBSCOHost Tutorials

Google Books lets you search and view entire volumes of scanned fiction and non-fiction texts.

How to Search Google Books:

Step 1 Open the Google Books homepage. From the main Google website, click on the "More" drop-down menu near the top of the page and choose "Books" from the options that appear.

Step 2 Browse through the collection by selecting one of the genre links to the left of the page. Google offers full-text books from a variety of genres, including literature, poetry, science fiction and political science.

Step 3 Do a basic book search by entering a title or author into the blank field on the main page. Click "Search books". When you're ready to go and Google will turn up the matching results.

Step 4 Scan through the search results and see if your book is listed.

Step 5 Conduct a more thorough inquiry by clicking on the "Advanced Book Search" link next to the main search field. This allows you to search the database not only by authors and titles, but also by their publication dates, languages, publishers and ISBNs.

Using ScreenHunter to save any part you need (as an image):

(**1**) Download and install the program from the following site:
http://www.wisdom-soft.com/products/screenhunter_free.htm

(2) After double clicking the icon on your desktop , press "Stand by" in the widow that opens up:
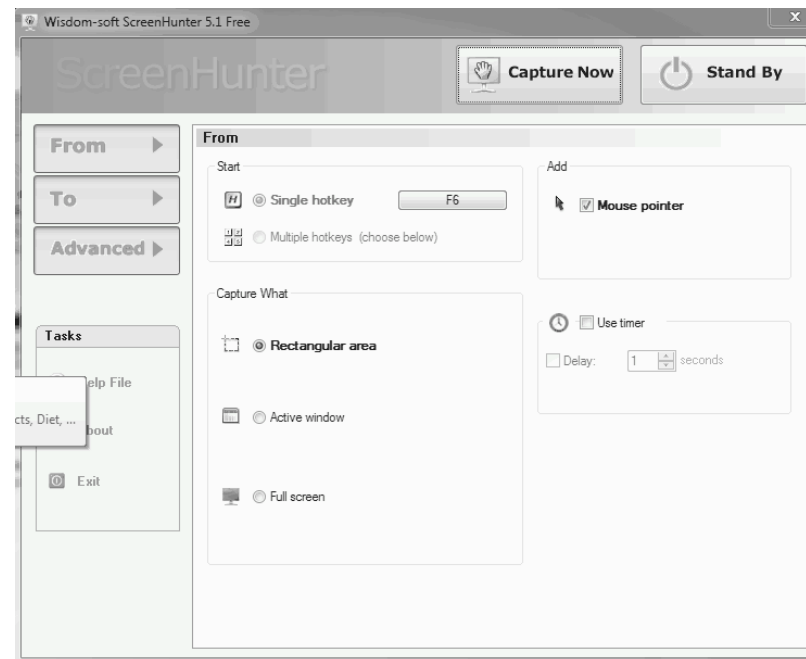
(3) When you're ready to cut something out, you press (F6) or (F6 + CTRL), finally press once and drag to capture the image of the area that you need. The image is automatically saved on your desktop.

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☑ **4ᵗʰ Assignment**

Choose one narrowed-down topic (AFTER MAKING SURE YOU HAVE ENOUGH INFORMATION) to get your instructor's approval.

☑ **5ᵗʰ Assignment**

Collect your information from different online or printed sources. Also copy/paste all publication info (i.e. author's name, title, date of publication, etc.) Download the sample from your instructor's site and create something similar to it.