

# Using Brock Library Resources

To write a good sociological paper, there are **Brock Library staff, services, print and digital sociological resources** that can be of great assistance. You may benefit from an in-class presentation, attend a workshop, watch a video tutorial, schedule an in-person research consultation, chat online with a librarian, or talk with someone who can direct you to locate specific resources on your topic. The [Brock Library home page](#) is an excellent starting point to learn more about how to use library resources, get help, search for books, articles, review materials, streaming videos and access sociological collections. The [Library's Research Guide for Sociology](#) provides insight and annotated lists of resources on how to begin your research and best bets to search for, identify, evaluate and incorporate key resources in your paper.

As a student of sociology, you may have many different assignments and papers that require research. You may be wondering, **“How do I find sociological sources, for my paper?”** **“What is a Sociological Topic?”** One problem is that students may be taking sociology alongside other subjects that concentrate on similar issues and topics. It is important to remember that a **sociological perspective on a topic is *unique and different* from the approach taken by psychology, or perhaps child studies, as related social sciences disciplines.**

Let us consider **how to begin your library research**. It is a good idea to start as soon as possible, so there will be enough time to identify and use material in the library, or request it from another source. Do not expect that one or two searches / trips to the library will do. Markers can see when a student has gathered sources which are “on topic”, but which do not have the coherence a thorough library search produces. [Books/ebooks](#), [background](#) information, handbook articles and basic sociological texts including Open Educational Resources (OERs) are excellent first steps. You may also need to request books on loan, or use the Library's [Interlibrary Loan / RACER](#) service to retrieve resources not in the Brock Library Collection, but available free (upon registering) delivered by email often within 48 hours for articles and 3-5 days for books. Be sure to give yourself lots of time.

In order to **gain control of your topic**, you must take steps to sufficiently **familiarize yourself with the sociological literature on it**. If you do not make this effort, you may waste significant amounts of time, researching irrelevant issues, or you may end up trying to formulate a paper with bits and pieces of information that you cannot assimilate because a solid foundation of understanding has not been established. **Whether or not a student is ‘in control’ of his or her topic will always be evident to the marker.** This will not be possible unless considerable effort is made on your part and you have blocked out sufficient library research time in your schedule.

Most essential readings and review materials are provided in the **course outline** identified using the [Sakai](#) site. Ask your faculty member and seminar leader for key resources in a certain subject area. Note that every book or journal article leads you to others on the topic, listed in the cited references / bibliography. Try to identify the major authors in the area; other authors will cite them frequently. Do your best to find works by and about Canadians if your focus is on a Canadian issue. Go back to the library and look up interesting references you have identified from the material you have already gathered. **Develop a strategy that identifies and defines sociological terms, major concepts and paper boundaries** e.g. language, dates, groups, etc.

Once you have a paper thesis statement, definitions, concepts and keywords... consult the [Library Sociology Guide](#) to search any number of databases looking for scholarly peer-reviewed [journal articles](#), [statistics](#), and [background information](#) to include in your paper. Searching for [news articles](#) and [streaming video](#) is an excellent way to find current information, quotes, announced reports and supplementary commentaries. Take advantage of these resources as it gives you the tools for familiarizing yourself with a topic and can only benefit the outcome of your paper. Don't forget to download resources, photocopy when needed, track and cite all sources. **Plagiarism is an unforgivable major crime in sociology** – ask for assistance to know how best to retain, use, quote, and cite these resources.

Filling out your paper with essential articles, book chapters and review articles helps to round out your argument(s). Retrieving essential resources by downloading or going to the Brock Library and borrowing / copying print resources before you start to write makes it easier to organize your paper. **Ask for assistance if needed!** To find books and documents on your topic, use the [Omni](#) database. Limit your search using appropriate keywords, modifying your search by availability, resource type, publication date, additional keyword(s) and subject. You may book a consultation with a librarian, ask for help at the Gibson Library's Ask Us Desk, consult the [Research Help](#) resources, and work with colleagues to locate essential resources prior to writing. A good paper includes key book(s), cited definitions, review articles, scholarly journal articles and supplementary news, data and commentary. **Remember that you are one of many students, so try to become as independent as possible.**

The Brock Library has many print and online resources to help with writing located on the Library's Research Guide for Sociology under the [Writing & Citing](#) tab. These resources include books and guide on how to successfully cite, edit, reference and incorporate information/data in your paper. Resources include guides to help frame a good paper. These resources help you to include key elements, answer important questions, and turn to well-defined social scientists' strategies to write a successful paper in a careful, determined and timely manner.