



Sources for Browsing Topics

A textbook introduces a topic to non-specialists and generally includes a bibliography of books and articles consulted. A good chapter can provide an overview and the bibliography can point to more information.

Encyclopedias cover the entire range of human knowledge in brief. A search for a basic concept recalls every mention of that concept in the encyclopedia, indicating different contexts for it and some of the fields of study that have explored it. Reference materials cannot be checked out of the library, but you are welcome to make photocopies or take notes.

Subject encyclopedias cover the knowledge base of a single discipline in brief. A search here can familiarize you with some of the different contexts within which your topic has been discussed in a discipline. Reference materials cannot be checked out of the library, but you are welcome to make photocopies or take notes.

Periodical databases offer related keywords based on your topic, which will acquaint you with other terminology surrounding your topic. Full-text electronic versions of articles from magazines and journals that include your topic are made readily available to you. From the library's webpage, click on EBSCO for the journal database or PROQUEST for the newspaper database.

Topic Web sites

Encyclopedia Smithsonian, Maintained by the Smithsonian Institution
http://www.si.edu/Encyclopedia_SI/default.htm

Encarta, Reference site from MSN Microsoft
http://encarta.msn.com/artcenter_0/Encyclopedia_Articles.html#tcsel

Education Resource Information Center, ERIC Topic Thesaurus
<http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/>

Bartleby, Comprehensive public reference library
<http://www.bartleby.com/>

IPL, Internet Public Library
<http://www.ipl.org/div/subject/>