

## Start with background information

### Video Transcript

Background information is the best place to start when you are learning about a new topic.

Scholarly journal articles can be very specific and full of academic jargon.

Before you dive into these, it helps to have an overview of your topic, so that you can understand where your article fits into the big picture.

To find background information that you can cite in your paper, you'll want library encyclopedias.

Go to [library.mills.edu](http://library.mills.edu), then click on Databases & Articles.

Use the tabs at the top to find "Reference".

Take a look at the sources listed. If none of them seem like the right fit for your topic, go with Gale Virtual Reference Library, which is a collection of encyclopedias covering all kinds of information.

From here, use your keywords to search for your topic.

You can use the filters on the right to narrow down your results.

Look at the names of the different encyclopedia titles, and keep an eye out for topic overviews.

Sometimes the results don't come back in the best order and you need to do a bit of scrolling.

Once you find an article that looks good, you can send it in an email to yourself, or upload it directly into your google drive.

Be sure to use the Citation Tools to cut and paste the citation for your bibliography

Wikipedia is also a good place to search for background information, but you probably can't cite it in your bibliography and it is not as reliable as the library encyclopedias.

If you are using Wikipedia, be sure to check out the reference list for other scholarly articles that you can look up.

Whenever you start on a new topic, it helps to begin with a big-picture summary. Use encyclopedias to get started on your research project.