



Searching Online

Why Must I Search for Information?

When we make a **claim**, we must support it with **evidence**.

If we do not support our claims, then our readers will say:

- How do you know?
- What evidence do you have?
- Why should I believe you?

We have to search for good evidence to support our claims.

Where Do I Find Good Evidence?

You can find good evidence online in **soft copy**.

Example soft copy sources include books, magazines, reports, charts, news articles, maps, brochures, videos, documents, etc.

Why Not Use a Library?

Hard copy sources in a library can soon become **outdated**.

How Do I Find Sources Online?

You can find soft copy sources online by using a search engine.

A **search engine** is an application that:

- Knows what sources are online, and
- Can get the sources for you.

Searching Online

How Does a Search Engine Work?

A search engine works like an index in a book.

Example book index::

Index

| |
|---------------------------|
| Birth control, 360 |
| Blind faith, 17-18 |
| Blindness |
| egocentric, 248-249 |
| ethical, 347 |
| Boyle, Robert, 414 |

Book Page

manipulating a crowd and whipping up enthusiasm. Fewer people seem to recognize the power of sound thinking in helping us solve our problems and live a fulfilling life. Few, in short, have genuine confidence in reason. Instead, people tend to have uncritical or **blind faith** in one or more of the following, often resulting from irrational drives and emotions:

1. Faith in charismatic national leaders (Think of leaders able to excite millions of people and manipulate them into supporting unjust wars or even [such as Hitler] to support genocide of an entire religious group.)
2. Faith in charismatic cult leaders
3. Faith in the father as the traditional head of the family (as defined by religious or social tradition)
4. Faith in institutional authorities (police, social workers, judges, priests, evangelical preachers, and so forth)
5. Faith in spiritual powers (such as a "holy spirit" as defined by various religious belief systems)
6. Faith in some social group, official or unofficial (faith in a gang, in the business community, in a church, in a political party, and so on)
7. Faith in a political ideology (such as right-wing fundamentalism, left-wing fundamentalism, communism, capitalism, Fascism)
8. Faith in intuition
9. Faith in one's unanalyzed emotions
10. Faith in one's gut impulses

The index has pairs of key words and page numbers to help you turn to a topic in the book.

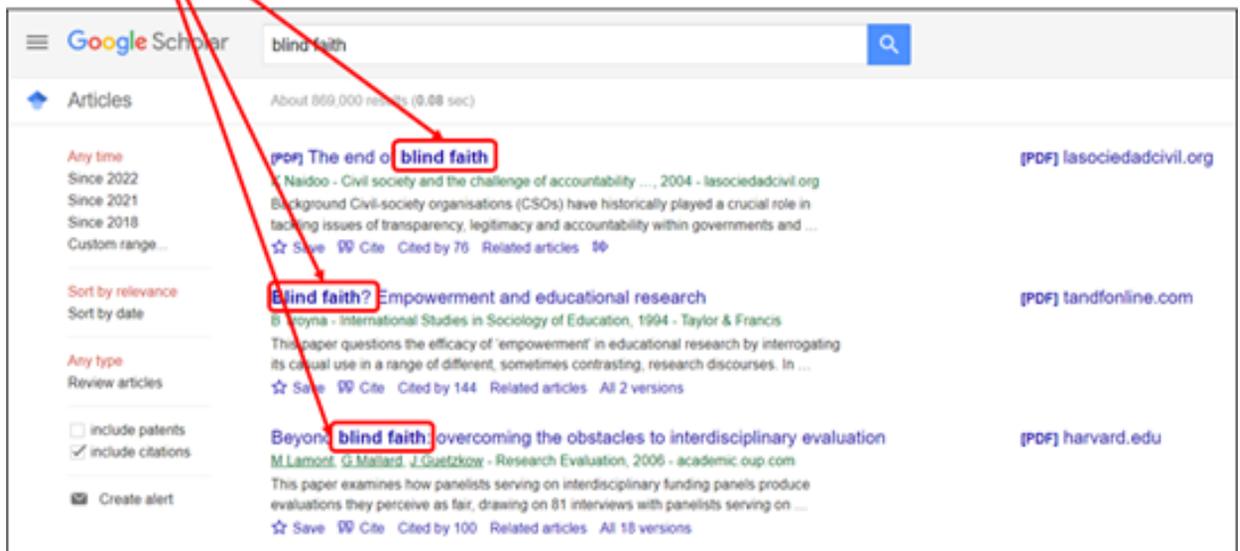
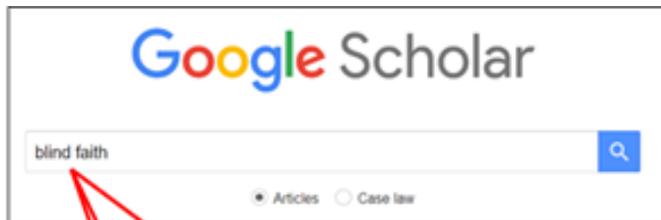
Searching Online

How Does a Search Engine Work?

Similarly, a search engine uses keywords called **search terms** to find information about a topic.

Type in the terms, and the search engine gives you **hotlinks** to the document or web page.

Example:



How Do I Know What Search Terms to Use?

You can:

- Guess.
- Try to use important terms you already know about the topic.
- Use a thesaurus.
- Look for search terms.



Searching Online

Use a Thesaurus to Find Related Search Terms

Many search engines have a **Thesaurus**.

Example:

The screenshot shows the ERIC Thesaurus search interface. The search term "project" is entered in the search box. Below the search box, there are checkboxes for "Include Synonyms" and "Include Dead terms". The search results are displayed in a grid format, with "Science Projects" and "Student Projects" highlighted by a red box.

Where to Look for Search Terms

| Resource | Where to Look for Important Terms | |
|-----------|--|--|
| Books | Index Glossary | Table of contents Bold or italics text |
| Wikipedia | Contents Headings Bold or italics text | Hotlinks "See also" section near the bottom |
| Web Pages | Headings Bold or italics text Hotlinks | Menus Buttons |
| Files | Index Glossary Table of contents | Bold or italics text Hotlinks |



Searching Online

Don't Use Ordinary English!

Ordinary English:

Tell me everything you know about government corruption in Liberia.

What search engine "sees":

everything know government corruption Liberia

What you actually said:

Find me every article with the words "everything" and "know" and "government" and "corruption" and "Liberia" in it.

Too many terms! Search is too narrow!

Type *only* what you want:

government corruption Liberia

What Are the Types of Search Engines?

| Type | What It Does | Examples |
|------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| General-Purpose | Finds any source | Google, Bing |
| Academic | Finds sources that are academic writing | Google Scholar, Research Gate |
| Special-Purpose | Only finds sources in subject areas (e.g., education, business, medicine) | ERIC, EBSCO |

What Are Open Access Databases?

Open Access Databases are special-purpose search engines.

Open Access Databases are *free* for students.

Some require you to create a **user id** and **password** and log in.