Teacher assistants
Research skills

Library Guide web address:  wsi.tafensw.libguides.com/bluemts_teacherassist

Skills to use through the research process:

Evaluate your information:  wsi.tafensw.libguides.com/bluemts_teacherassist

- Does the information you’ve found answer your questions? What are your requirements?
- **Author** and **publisher**:
  - ✓ Who are they? What is their authority?
  - ✓ What is their bias and purpose in writing or presenting this information?
- **Coverage** or **scope**:
  - ✓ Is the information appropriate for your purpose? E.g. is it at an appropriate level and depth? Look at your assessment – does it specify particular requirements
  - ✓ Have you found various sides of the story? E.g. for and against in a controversial issue; or, some statistics as well as a personal account; or, information from a government department as well as from an advocacy group.
- **Currency**: is the date important to your topic?
- **Accuracy**: can the information be verified from other sources?

Searching tips:

- computers search for a string of letters in a row so use a variety of words in your searches
- advanced searching :: combining keywords and using limits e.g. site limit in Google
- if you aren’t finding anything, think about why – changing keywords broadening or narrowing your search

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Used to</th>
<th>These may be expressed as...</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keywords</td>
<td>A computer will simply search for a string of letters. Think about alternative words that essentially mean the same e.g. educate, teach, learn Think about broader and narrower terms e.g. disability, aspergers Some words will work better in different tools.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Truncation</td>
<td>To search for different endings (e.g. child$ will find child, child’s, children)</td>
<td>$ (TAFE library catalogue) $</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* (most eResources) $</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AND</strong></td>
<td>To narrow a search so that two or more words must appear in your results (anywhere, in any order)</td>
<td>AND</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>OR</strong></td>
<td>To widen a search to include alternative words in your results (in any order)</td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phrase search</td>
<td>To narrow your search to results that include your words in a specified order</td>
<td>‘special needs’ (i.e. using quote marks) Use single quote ‘…’ marks in the catalogue Use double quotes “…” in eResources</td>
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The research process

1. What do you already know about your topic and what do you need to find out?

- Brainstorm definitions, keywords and issues: alternative words; broader and narrower terms; words covering various aspects of your topic – and what you need to find out. You might use a quick internet search to explore the topic & to help build up definitions and keywords and ideas if you are unsure where to start
- A mind map is useful to: identify keywords; plan your searching and in organising the information you have found. Add to your mind map as you go.

2. What can libraries offer?

Help with using TAFE electronic resources and the Internet

Books & documentaries  Use the catalogue
Find the catalogue from the library’s webpage
Go to the Library web page wsilibraries.tafensw.edu.au/blue-mountains

Click Cancel when asked for your username and password

Click Catalogue on middle menu

Tips - try different keywords
- limit to Blue Mountains College Library,
- check subjects for more alternative words

• Be aware of your search terms e.g. difference in results for asperger and aspergers and autism and autistic
• You might also try broader search terms such as: ‘education disab$’ limited to Blue Mountains College Library, ‘inclusive education’ ‘children disabilities’ ‘special education’ ‘special needs
• Check the subject headings for alternative words
• You might combine your search with other words e.g. ‘apsergers education’
• Start by limiting to Blue Mountains, but also broaden your search to ALL TAFE libraries >> You can request two items at a time on inter library loan.
• A red tick ✔ means the item is held at Blue Mountains

You can create a list and email this list to yourself. Search using your topic keywords. Identify items you want to remember. Click on each item to add it to the ‘Tempt List’. Then, click on ‘Tempt List’ (along the top of the page) and enter your email address when prompted.
3. Libraries can also offer access to electronic resources:

   **Access to TV current affairs and newspaper and journal articles**
   Use an eResource

   - Go to the library’s webpage wsilibraries.tafensw.edu.au/blue-mountains
   - Click on eResources (it’s listed on the right hand side of the page, under the WSI Libraries heading)
   - Access these resources with your DEC portal username & password unless otherwise indicated:

     - **ANZRC**  Australian and international newspapers & magazines & journals
     - **Australian Public Affairs (APA-Ft)**  scholarly journal articles in the social sciences and humanities published in Australia. *(Please note: access is ending soon to APAFT)*

     **Username is:** wstafe  
     **Password is:** library

     - **ProQuest**  Australian and international newspapers & magazines & journals
     - **TV News**  Australian TV news, current affairs and documentaries

4. Use the Google advanced search to target relevant information

   You can use Google advanced search to limit to various kinds of web sites:

   For example: organisation sites e.g.  site:.org.au  and  site:asn.au

   For example:

   ![Google search example](image1)

   ![Google search example](image2)

   Or government sites e.g.  site:gov.au

   For example:

   ![Google search example](image3)

   Also use Google to search within big sites e.g. for the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

   ![Google search example](image4)

4. Review all the information you have found and evaluate it. Are there any gaps?

   - Authors and publishers – appropriate?
   - Coverage or scope:
     - is the information appropriate for my purpose?
     - is the information at the appropriate level and depth?
     - If needed, have I found various sides of the story? Eg for and against in a controversial issue; or, some statistics as well as a personal account; or, information from a government department as well as from an advocacy group.
   - Currency:  is the information as current as possible?
   - Accuracy:  can the information be verified from other sources?