Research in 5 easy steps

From the TCC Library

**Step 1: Find a topic**
Choose a topic that interests you.
Conduct a preliminary search.* Look to see what kind of coverage exists for your topic. Is it hard to find info? Do you get too much? Adjust your topic to be broader or more narrow depending on what your search results look like.
Generate keywords to use for later searches by coming up with synonyms for your topic and related ideas.

*What are good places to do a preliminary search?*
Google and Wikipedia are great places to get familiar with a topic!
If you want something more "formal," try Oxford Reference Center through the TCC library.

**What if I need help evaluating?**
Book a research consultation with a librarian! Librarians will book 30 minutes of dedicated time to help you with your project. Bookings are available from the library homepage under "Schedule a Research Consultation."
http://library.tulsacc.edu/researchconsult

**Step 2: Gather your information**
Information comes in different containers. Primarily we find research info in books, articles and webpages.
Books: Books are good for detailed information over a topic, including background issues.
Articles: Good for specific facets of a topic, or to read about issues of interest to a professional or academic community.
Websites: Professional organizational websites, government sites and educational sites can be great places to learn about a topic.

**Step 3: Evaluate your information**
Do your resources actually support your research project?
Are websites trustworthy?*
Did you meet any syllabus restrictions on format?
This would be a time to finalize or tighten up a research question or a thesis statement based off the information you've explored that focuses your research project.

*I need help with Websites!*
There are many helpful guidelines for evaluating websites, such as the CRAAP test, ABCD test, and more. Ask your librarian.

**Step 4: organize your information**
Organize your research: consider using a citation organizer like Zotero.
Read articles, highlight them and take notes.
Outline your research.
Look for gaps in your information: do you need to gather again?

**Step 5: Cite your sources!**
Most database give article citations: look for them. Also, citation tools like Easybib can be great for roughing out a citation, but...
Double check everything with the MLA/APA handbook or a Writing Center handout.
Still confused? Make an appointment with a Writing Center tutor at a convenient campus.

Conclusion: time to present!
Paper formatted correctly? Need help with writing? Try contacting the Writing Center:
http://guides.library.tulsacc.edu/writingcenter
The Research Process doesn't always end up being a simple path from beginning to end. Sometimes, the information leads you back a step or two, and that's perfectly OK!