STARTING YOUR RESEARCH

Contact your librarian: Dominique Coulombe dc@brown.edu Tel: 863 9666 or Stephen L. Thompson Stephen_L_Thompson@brown.edu Tel. 863-1721

• Describe your research topic in a brief statement and why you are interested in this topic.

• List the primary text(s) you will be using for your paper (use the texts and myths section on the resource guide).

• List the reference sources you are planning on using: general or subject encyclopedias, dictionaries, etc.

• List the keyword or subject terms you’ll be using

__________________________________     __________________________________
__________________________________     __________________________________
__________________________________     __________________________________
__________________________________     __________________________________

TIPS:

• Include synonyms and alternate spellings
• Use keywords found in reference works or course readings
• Think of narrower or broader terms
• Select the types of sources you need

☐ Books          ☐ Scholarly Journals          ☐ Newspapers
☐ Films          ☐ Websites                ☐ Primary documents
☐ Images         ☐ Other __________________________

• Using the course guide, select the databases and research tools for finding these types of sources

• Note the database or research tool, your search queries and your findings. **Keep track of your citations** as you find relevant resources (see the section on **Managing citations** in the course guide):

______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

• To improve your search results
  1. Use Boolean searching:
     a) If your result set (number of items found or retrieved) is too large to read through productively, add another term or terms to your search to make the search more specific (using AND). Example: Iphigenie AND Goethe.
     b) If your result set has fewer items than you need, then add additional related or synonymous terms to broaden the search (using OR). Example: Phaedra OR Phedre.
     c) Use NOT to eliminate words that are spelled the same way but have different meanings and subcategories of topics that are not relevant; for example: Metamorphosis NOT Ovid.

  2. Limit your search with language or dates of publication, format.

• Evaluate your sources

  Critically examine each resource you found using the following criteria:
  o Examine the source of the information. Is it from a commercial or scholarly publisher? Is the source reputable and recognized in the field?
  o Try to obtain some biographical information about the author(s). Which point of view does s/he may represent?
  o Think through the argument or logic that is presented to you. Does it flow logically? Is there enough information presented to draw a conclusion?
  o Is the information relevant to the topic you are researching?