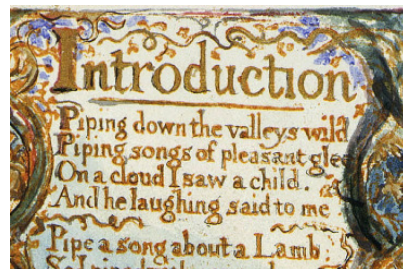


RESEARCH SKILLS

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Detail of image of introduction of Blake's Songs of Innocence found at http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Blake_si_intro.jpg (last access: 28 June 2006)

Information research and gathering for your paper

When your task is to write a paper, finding more information on your research topic is essential. You will need different kinds of information at the various stages of your research process. According to Rumsey (2004: 2), the process of "finding, accessing and handling information" can be "more circular than linear for large projects". To a certain extent this is true of all research. Research into a topic will usually uncover unthought-of aspects of the original question or raise new questions, which will lead to the need for additional, different or new information and a new round of information research and gathering.

Rumsey (2004: 2) names the following stages of the "information-gathering process":

- Analysing the question or problem
- Defining the scope of the research and what information is required
- Identifying sources of that information (resource discovery)
- Finding where the information is stored (resource location)
- Gaining access to the information
- Ensuring that the information retrieved is a) what is required b) reliable (and possibly c) current)
- Managing searches and results
- Keeping up to date and monitoring new developments

(1) Defining your research topic and deciding on what information is needed

Ask yourself: *What is or how do I define my topic question? What aim and scope does my research project have? What type(s) of research does my project involve? What background information do I need to formulate my research question? What are the questions my research should answer? What is my "main" research question? Which information resources are relevant to what I wish to achieve? What kind of information do I need when?*



Try to formulate answers to these questions for your own research:

Research question:

Aim and scope of research

Type of research:

What questions should my research answer?

What are my own ideas at this stage?

What information do I need next?