



Library Exercise

University Library



Information diary

Objective: *To help you discover how you search for and process information.*

Minimum length: 3 pages.

Directions

Starting with a topic you know very little about, or an information need you currently have, begin to keep a diary of how you go about looking for that information. You should phrase your information need as a question, for example: *Are we really running out of oil?*

You will have four weeks to complete this diary. This diary is really about you reflecting on your searches for information, which I guarantee will change as you become more expert at the search process.

Be honest with yourself when keeping this diary—record all your searches, how you searched, where you searched, your successes, your search failures—in other words, tell a story! Of course, I expect you to actually USE some of the strategies you learn in class to affect how you go about searching for resources on your topic.

Tip: Carry a notebook with you while working on the research paper and keep track of dates and times of any search you do. Consider keeping a **dual entry log**. Simply draw a line down the center of your note paper. On the left side of that line write down URLs, quotations you have of sources you found. On the right side of the line write your reactions to these observations.

- Record all computer searches, including URLs of websites. Tell me what search engines you use, if you use one, and write down your exact search terms. *Be sure to include details of all searches, including frustrating ones!*
- Tell me how long you searched and where you finally found information. Note any titles of books or other materials you find (along with call numbers). If you find journal, newspaper or magazine articles, then tell me what database they came from or if you found them in paper.
- Record any visit to a Library. If you ask for help, get the names of library or information staff. Make sure to record *exactly* the question you ask them.
- Train yourself to record your reactions to information you encounter.