

RESEARCHING SKILLS

Finding Useful Sources

New Directions

Here’s a trick to help you find sources. Before you do your research, **rewrite** your topic a few different ways. For example, suppose your original topic was about aliens. You plan to look for sources about UFOs. To find as many useful sources as possible, rewrite your topic and ask yourself if your research can take a new direction. Different approaches might produce additional useful information. Here are some examples:

- Original topic:** “Could aliens travel to Earth from another galaxy?”
- New title:** “The Milky Way and Other Galaxies”
- Possible new research direction:** Comparing the Milky Way galaxy with other galaxies
- New title:** “Life As We Know It”
- Possible new research direction:** What conditions and chemicals are necessary for life as we know it to exist?

Your Turn

Try rewriting these two topic titles and point out a new research direction.

- Original topic:** “The science of artificial limbs”
- Research direction:** Medical technology
- New title:** _____
- Possible new research direction:** _____
- Original topic:** “Strange New Insect Species in Canadian Rain Forest”
- Research direction:** Environmental science
- New title:** _____
- Possible new research direction:** _____

TROUBLESHOOTING

Here are a few more tips for doing better research:

1. Try to use several different types of sources for any project.
2. Science is a field that changes quickly, so the more current your source, the better.
3. Think about whether you can make your search strategy more efficient.
4. If you get stuck, remember that it’s okay to ask for help!

TRY THIS!

Ask a parent or an older sibling about a research project he or she enjoyed doing. Discuss the search strategies he or she used, and think about whether you could use those strategies too.