

# Online Research

## Wikipedia: Great Tool for “Presearch”

- **Gives an overview** of the whole event, very helpful for historical events. If your topic is so narrow that you are not seeing the big picture, it will be much more difficult to keep your thesis and writing relevant and accurate.
- Many articles have a lot of **great citations and sources, usually with links**. For example, the page on the Vietnam War, has 430 citations, plus numerous references and primary sources.
- Wikipedia is not a credible source and should never be cited in research, but it is an amazing tool.

## Finding Resources Online:

- Look for credible websites. Clues come at the **end of site names**.
  - Strongest are: .edu or .gov
  - Usually good: .org
  - Not credible .com or .net
- [Google Scholar](#) is hugely helpful for filtering out non credible or irrelevant information and finding quality articles.
- Use the **advanced search** settings in your search engine to look for very specific information.

## Online Search Shortcuts:

- (-) to **narrow search**. Ex. [harry potter -movie] would allow you to search for things related to Harry Potter, but filtering out anything related to the movies.
- (“\_\_\_\_\_”) to search for a particular phrase or **exact wording**.
- (site:\_\_\_\_\_) to search within a site. Ex. [site:ushistory.org valley forge] would produce results related to Valley Forge within the website [www.ushistory.org](http://www.ushistory.org).
- Capitalization does not affect the search.
- Words like “and” or “the” are generally filtered out of searches.

## Online Databases:

- Many that are good, but some require subscriptions. These subscriptions are often taken care of by having a library card or through your school.
- Most colleges rely very heavily on online databases, some of which are organized by content area. JStor and ProQuest are the two most popular.
- [Scott County Library Research Page](#)