

# supporting your ideas

## chapter 7

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### introduction

In 2010 celebrity chef Jamie Oliver won the Technology Entertainment Design (TED) Prize for his “One Wish to Change the World.” In addition to a monetary award, he was given 18 minutes at the prestigious TED Conference in Long Beach, CA to discuss his wish: “Teach every child about food” (Oliver, 2010). This chef from Essex, England, had only a short window of time to convince an American audience to change their most basic eating habits. To get them to listen he had to catch their attention and demonstrate his credibility. He managed to do both using compelling research. He began by saying, “Sadly, in the next 18 minutes . . . four Americans that are alive will be dead from the food that they eat” (Oliver, 2010). He magnified the problem with a chart showing that many more Americans die from diet related diseases each year than die from other diseases, or even from accidents and murder. Along with the statistics, he

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*I take what I see work. I'm a strict believer in the scientific principle of believing nothing, only taking the best evidence available at the present time, interpreting it as best you can, and leaving your mind open to the fact that new evidence will appear tomorrow.*

~ Adam Osborne

### chapter objectives

After studying this chapter you should be able to:

1. Combine multiple forms of evidence to support your ideas.
2. Differentiate between the three types of testimony, and know when to use each one.
3. Navigate the library holdings and distinguish between the types of information found in each section.
4. Evaluate source credibility and appropriateness for your speech.
5. Explain plagiarism and implement strategies to avoid it.
6. Apply chapter concepts in review questions and activities

offered testimony from people living in the “most unhealthy state in America” (Oliver, 2010). By weaving together multiple forms of research over the course of his brief talk, Oliver crafted a compelling case for a massive shift in the way that Americans teach their children about food.

Like Oliver, in order to give an effective speech, you will need to offer support for the ideas you present. Finding support necessitates research. Librarians have found that professors and students tend to have very different ideas regarding what it means to conduct research (Sjoberg & Ahlfeldt, 2010). Professors, who regularly

conduct scholarly research as part of their occupation, tend to envision a process filled with late nights in the stacks of a library (Leckie, 1996). Students, who regularly conduct research on where to eat or what to do as part of their weekend activities, tend to envision a less formal process that involves consulting the most popular web search results. The reality is that in order to properly support your ideas and craft a compelling speech, you will need a little of each approach, possibly combined with additional investigative tools with which you may be less-familiar. The wide variety of resources available for conducting research can be overwhelming. However, if you

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have a clear topic, recognize the purpose of your speech, and understand the audience you will be speaking to, you can limit the number of sources you will need to consult by focusing on the most relevant information.

Once you know the topic of the speech, you can create the specific purpose statement. This is a one sentence summary of the goal of your speech, that may begin with the phrase, “At the end of my speech, the audience will be able to..”. This statement guides your research as you piece together the supporting evidence to fill out the remainder of your speech. As you work through the types of support in this chapter, continually ask yourself, “Does this evidence support the goal of my speech?” If the source offers information that contradicts your specific purpose statement, hold on to it so that you can address the contradiction with evidence for your own idea. If it does appear to support your specific purpose statement, the next question you will ask is “Is this evidence appropriate for my audience?” Different types of appeals and evidence are better for different audiences. The best speeches will combine multiple forms of evidence to make the most convincing case possible. This chapter will help you research your speech by combining personal and professional knowledge, library resources, and Internet searches. It will help you to evaluate the sources you find and cite them to avoid plagiarism.

### personal and professional knowledge

Professional public speakers are generally called upon to address a topic

on which they are considered an expert. You may not feel like an expert in the area of your speech at this time, but you should consider whether you have any preexisting knowledge of the topic that might assist in crafting your speech. Do not be afraid to draw on your own experience to enhance the message.

*Do you know the difference between education and experience? Education is when you read the fine print; experience is what you get when you don't.*

~ Pete Seeger

### personal testimony

Walter Fisher argues that humans are natural storytellers. Through stories people make sense of their experiences, and they invite others to understand their lived reality as part of a community (Fisher, 1984). One compelling story that you can offer is your personal testimony. Although you are not a recognized authority on the topic, you can invite the audience to understand your firsthand experience. Offering your testimony within a speech provides an example of your point, and it enhances your credibility by demonstrating that you have experience regarding the topic. Additionally, personal testimony can enhance your speech by conveying your insight and emotion regarding the topic, making your speech more memorable (Beebe & Beebe, 2003; Parse, 2008). For example, if you are giving a speech on the importance of hunting to the local culture, you might explain how the last buck you shot fed your family for an entire season.

Since personal testimony refers to your experience, it is easy to assume that you can offer it with little preparation. However, psychologists have found that as people tell their stories they relive the experience (Gladding & Drake Wallace, 2010). As you relive the experience, your tendency will be to enrich the story

with detail and emotion, which is part of what makes it memorable, but this practice may also make the story too long and distract from your point. If you plan to use personal testimony in your speech, practice the story to make sure that it makes the appropriate point in the time you have.

If you do not have personal experience with the topic, you may seek out other forms of lay testimony to support your point. Lay testimony is any testimony based on witnesses' opinions or perceptions in a given case (“Federal Rules,” 2012). For example, if you are giving a speech about Occupy Wall Street, but you have not experienced one of their protests, you may choose to include statements from a protestor or someone who identifies with the goals of the movement.



### interviews

Lay testimony can offer insight into the past and into areas where individual sentiments are relevant, but if you are called upon to make predictions regarding the future or speak to an issue where you have little relevant experience, expert testimony may provide more convincing support (Beebe & Beebe, 2003). Expert testimony comes from a recognized



authority who has conducted extensive research on an issue. Experts regularly publish their research findings in books and journals, which we will discuss later in this chapter, but you may need more information from the expert in order to substantiate your point. For example, if you were giving a speech about how to prepare for a natural disaster, you might interview someone from the Red Cross. They could tell you what supplies might be necessary for the specific types of disasters that are likely in your region. Interviews give people the chance to expand on their published research and offer their informed perspective on the specific point you are trying to make.

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*My basic approach to interviewing is to ask the basic questions that might even sound naive, or not intellectual. Sometimes when you ask the simple questions like “Who are you?” or “What do you do?” you learn the most.*

~ Brian Lamb

If you are seeking an interview with an expert, it is best to arrange a time and place that works for them. Begin the process with a respectful phone call or email explaining who you are and why you are contacting them. Be forthcoming regarding the information you are seeking and the timeline in which you are working. Also be flexible about the format for your interview. If you can meet in person, that is often ideal because it gives you the chance to get to know the person and to ask follow up questions if necessary. A good alternative to an in person interview is a video call using a service such as Skype. These services are often free to both callers and allow you to see and hear the person that you are interviewing. If neither of these options will work, a phone call or email will do. Keep in mind that while an email may seem convenient to you, it



will likely require much more time from the expert as they have to type every answer, and they may not be as forthcoming with information in that format.

Before the interview, write down your questions. When you talk to someone, it is easy to get caught up in what they are saying and forget to focus on the information you need. Once you begin the interview work to establish rapport with the person you are interviewing. You can foster rapport by demonstrating that you respect their viewpoint, by taking turns in your interactions, by allowing them to finish their thought without interrupting, and by giving them the freedom to use their preferred forms of expression (Lindolf & Taylor, 2002). As you ask each question, take note of their response and ask for clarification or to follow up on information you did not anticipate. If you plan to record the interview, ask for permission in advance. Even if you are given permission to record, take paper and a writing utensil along to make back-up notes in case your recording device fails. When the interview is complete, thank the person and check to see whether they would welcome further contact to follow up if necessary.

After the interview, review your notes for insight that substantiates your

specific purpose statement. Look for quotes that bring together the person’s expertise with their reflections on the topic you are addressing. It is likely that you will gain more knowledge from the interview than you can possibly include in a short speech. Work to synthesize the main points from the interview into a coherent statement supporting your topic. Remember to be careful about properly quoting exact phrases that the person used. Even if you paraphrase, properly cite the interview and credit the expert for all of the ideas they shared with you.

### library resources

The most well established way of finding research to support your ideas is to use the library. However, many students see the “library and its resources as imposing and intimidating, and are anxious about how they will manage in such an environment” (Leckie, 1996, p. 204). Don’t let any twinge of anxiety keep you from exploring all that the library has to offer!

When conducting research, one of your best resources is the librarian. It is their job to know all about the resources available to you, and to help you succeed in locating the material that is most relevant to your assignment. Additionally, many

libraries have librarians who specialize in particular areas of research and they will be able to help you find the best resources for your specific speech topic. Ideally, you should seek some information on your topic alone before asking for their assistance. Doing some initial research independently demonstrates to the librarian that you have taken ownership of the assignment and recognize that the research is ultimately your responsibility, not theirs. They will be better equipped to help you find new information if they know where you have already looked and what you have found. Most libraries contain at least three primary resources for information: books, periodicals, and full text databases.



## books

Books are an excellent place to gain general knowledge. They contain comprehensive investigations of a subject in which authors can convey substantial amounts of information because they are not constrained by a strict page count. Some books are written by a single author while other books bring several scholars together in an edited collection. In both cases, you are likely to get a rich investigation of a

single topic. For example, if you were giving a speech about stereotypes of black women in America, you might check out Melissa Harris-Perry's (2011) book *Sister Citizen*, because she brings together literature, theory, and political science, to offer a detailed discussion of the development of four prominent stereotypes. In the book she has enough space to offer compelling images, narratives, and social scientific evidence for the impact those stereotypes have on contemporary society.

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*A library is not a luxury, but one of the necessities of life.*  
~ Henry Ward Beecher

Most libraries make finding books easy by indexing them in an online catalog. You should be able to go to the library's website and simply search for your topic. The index will provide the titles, authors, and other publication information for each book. It will also provide a call number. The call number is like an address for the book that indicates where it can be found on the stacks in the library. Before going to the stacks, take note of the title, author, and call number. The call number is the most important element, and the title and author will serve as backup for your search if you find that the books are out of order. If you find a book that is helpful, be sure to check the shelf nearby to see if there are other promising titles on that topic. If you cannot find the book that you are looking for, consider asking the librarian to help you borrow it from another library using a process called interlibrary loan.

The length of a book can make it seem overwhelming to someone researching a brief speech. In order to streamline your research, determine what you are looking for in advance. Are you seeking general background knowledge or support for a specific idea? Use the table of contents, headings, and index to guide you to the portion of the book that is likely to have what you are looking for. You do

not need to read, or even skim, the entirety of every book. It is appropriate to skim for key words and phrases that pertain to your topic. Just be sure that once you find what you are looking for, you read enough of the section around it to understand the context of the statement and ensure that the book is making the point you think it is. Take note of the point that the book is making. Careful notes will help you remember the information that you gained from each source when you get home.

In addition to the traditional stacks of books present in your library, you will also find a reference section. This section contains books that do not delve deep into any subject, but provide basic summary knowledge on a variety of topics. The reference section contains books like dictionaries, which help define unfamiliar terms; encyclopedias, which provide overviews of various subjects; abstracts, which summarize books and articles; and biographical references, which describe people and their accomplishments. Since these resources do not require extensive time to process, and they are likely to be used briefly but regularly by many visitors, the library generally will not allow you to check out reference material. Take great care in drafting notes on the information that you find, and writing down the page numbers and authors according to the style preferred in your field of study. For more information on what you will need to record see the "style guides" section of this chapter.





## periodicals

Books are comprehensive, but they can take years to get published. This means that the material in books is often at least a year old by the time of its publication date. If your speech depends on more recent information, you should turn to periodicals. Periodicals include magazines, newspapers, journals, and other publications printed at predictable intervals. These publications may appear weekly, monthly, or quarterly to update the research in a given field. Each periodical will offer a variety of articles related to a specific subject area.

When researching, it is important to understand the difference between general interest periodicals and scholarly research journals. General interest periodicals include magazines and newspapers which provide a wide array of knowledge and keep readers up to date on the news within a larger cultural context. These publications are targeted toward the general public and they often use pictures and advertising to attract attention. Examples of respected general interest publications include: *The Atlantic*, *Women's Health*, *The New York Times*, and *National Geographic* (American Society of Magazine Editors, 2011). These publications are intended for profit. The information in them is edited to make sure it will appeal to the audience, is well written, and consistent with the commercial goals of the publication. General interest periodicals are good for context and current events information. If you are giving a speech about the importance of military intervention in Syria, you could use a general interest periodical

like the *New York Times* to discover the most recent information on the conflict.

*A newspaper is a circulating library with high blood pressure.*

~ Arthur Baer

If you are looking for more rigorous research, such as an international relations expert detailing what forms of aid are best for nations experiencing uprisings, you will need a scholarly research journal. A scholarly research journal is not for profit. It is designed to publicize the best research in a particular area. These publications are targeted toward scholars who specialize in a given subject or type of research. Examples of respected scholarly journals include: *Journal of the American Medical Association*, *Harvard Law Review*, and *Quarterly Journal of Speech*. These journals engage in a process of peer review in which scholars send their articles to the editor and the editor has other experts in the field examine the article to determine the quality of its research, writing, and fit with the scholarly goal of the publication.

within a particular specialization, industry, or field. Libraries tend to organize links to these databases on their website in two ways: (1) by the area of specialization, or (2) by the name of the database. You can use the list of specializations to identify databases that will pertain to your topic. For example, if you are interested in research on *The Simpsons*, you might go to your library's subject list, click on "Communication," and choose a database such as Communication and Mass Media Complete. Some topics will be found in databases with less obvious titles. For example, the abstractly named Lexis-Nexis database provides access to newspaper articles, legal research, and government documents. If your initial search of databases in the list of specializations is not fruitful, ask your professor or librarian for recommendations concerning the most appropriate database for your topic.

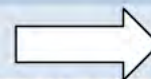
Full-text databases allow you access to the citations, abstracts, and articles in the journals that they index. However, they sometimes limit access to the full text of articles that were published within a certain date range. If you find a title that looks promising, but is not available in the database you are

**Table 7.1 Follow the Citation Trail**

If you are having trouble locating information on your topic, all you need is one relevant scholarly source and then you can follow the clues to locate more information by searching backward and forward.



To search backward, skim the source's bibliography for earlier publications on your topic.



Now To search forward, use Google Scholar's "cited by" function to find more recent publications on your topic.



## full-text databases

Rather than searching for a print copy of the latest periodical, many people now find articles on the computer using specialized electronic databases that contain the full text of periodicals. Most school libraries subscribe to a variety of databases which compile articles from journals

searching, try the search in another database. Databases give you the opportunity to search for articles matching your desired time period, author, publication, or key words. Some databases, such as EBSCO, allow you to specify whether you are looking for general interest or scholarly publications.



## internet resources

### search engines

A search engine can be your most important resource when attempting to locate information on the Internet. Search engines allow you to type in the topic you are interested in and narrow the possible results. Some of the most popular search engines include Google, Bing, Yahoo!, and Ask (eBizMBA, 2012). These sites provide a box for you to type a topic, phrase, or question, and they use software to scan their index of existing Internet content to find the sites most relevant to your search.

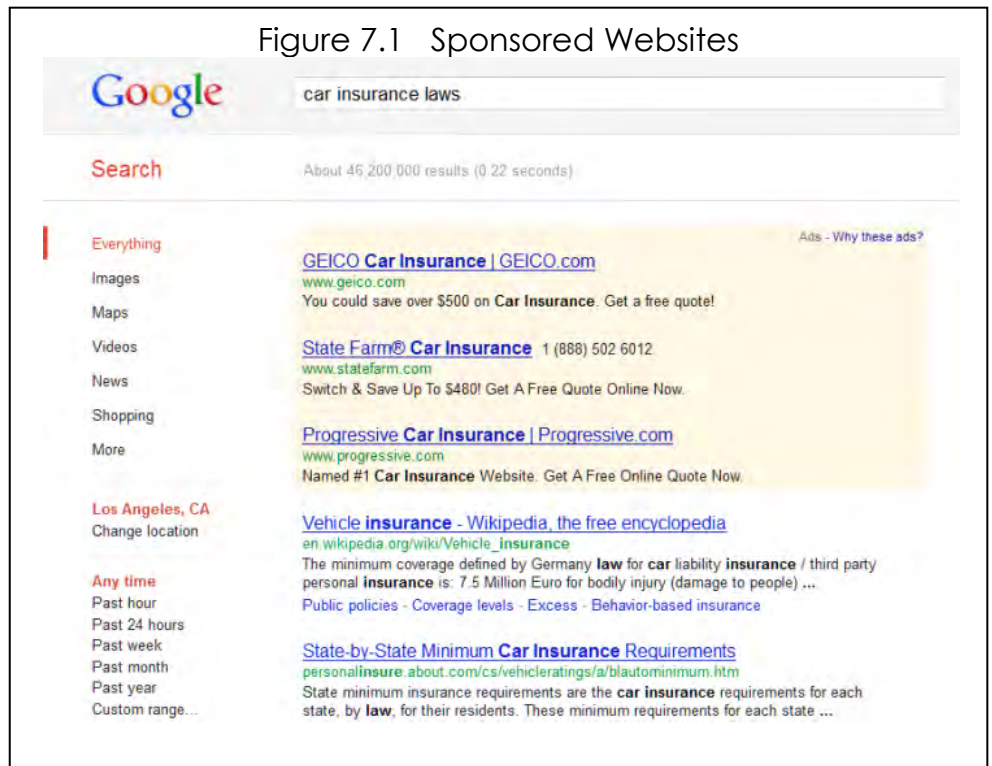


Each search engine uses different algorithms and techniques to locate and rank information, which may mean that the same search will yield different results depending on the search engine. Based on the algorithms it is using, the search engine will sort the results with those it determines to be most relevant appearing first. Since each site is different, you should use the one that seems most intuitive to you. However, since their ranking systems will also be different, you cannot assume that the first few sites listed in your chosen search engine are the most relevant. Always scan the first few pages of search results to find the best resource for your topic. Skimming the content of the pages returned in your search will also give you an idea of whether you have chosen the most appropriate search terms. If your search has returned results that are not relevant to your speech, you may need to adjust your search terms and try a new search.

*We want Google to be the third half of your brain.*

~ Sergey Brin

Figure 7.1 Sponsored Websites



Pay close attention to the first few sites listed in search results. Some databases allow “sponsored links” to appear before the rest of the results. If you are giving a speech about the dangers of rental cars, and you search rental car in Google, links to companies like Hotwire.com, Orbitz.com, or National Rental Car are likely to appear first in your results. These sites may or may not be relevant to your search, but they have also paid for the top spot on the list and therefore may not be the most relevant. When search engines display sponsored sites first, they typically distinguish these from the others by outlining or highlighting them in a different color. For example, while Google lists advertisements related to your search on the right-hand side of the screen, they sometimes also put a limited number of sponsored links at the top of your search results list. The only distinction between these sponsored links and the rest of the list is a subtly shaded box with a small label in the upper right indicating they are “Ads” (see Figure 7.1).

### defining search terms

In the early stages of research it may be helpful to simply search by topic.

For example, if you are interested in giving a speech about revolutions in the Middle East, you might type that topic into the database and scan the sites that come up. As you are scanning, watch for other useful terms that arise in relation to the topic and jot them down for possible use in later searches. Since people may write about the topic in different terms than you tend to think about it, paying close attention to their language will help you refine your search. Another way to approach this is to consider synonyms for your search terms before you even begin.

Once you have a concrete topic and have begun to outline the arguments you want to make, you are likely to need more specific terms to find what you are looking for. In order to help with the search, you may use Boolean operators, words and symbols that illustrate the relationship between your search terms and help the search engine expand or limit your results (see Table 7.2 on the next page for examples). Although search engines regularly adjust their Boolean rules to avoid people rigging the site to show their own pages first, a few basic terms tend

Table 7.2 Boolean Operators	
<b>OR</b>	The word "OR" is one way to expand your search by looking for a variety of terms that may help you support your topic. For example, in a speech about higher education, you might be interested in sources discussing either colleges or universities. In this case using the term "OR" helps expand your search to include both terms, even when they appear separately.
<b>AND/ +</b>	Using the word "AND" or the "+" symbol between terms limits your search by indicating to the search engine that you are interested in the relationship between the terms and want to see pages which offer both terms together. If you are giving a speech about Hillary Rodham Clinton's work in the Senate, you might search Hillary Rodham Clinton AND Senate. This search would help you find information pertaining to her senate career rather than sites that focus on her as First Lady or Secretary of State.
<b>NOT/-</b>	Using the word "NOT" or the "-" symbol can also limit your search by indicating that you are not interested in a term that may often appear with your desired term. For example, if you are interested in hyenas, but want to limit out sites focused on their interactions with lions, you might search hyena -lion to eliminate all of the lion pages from your search.
<b>" "</b>	Quotation marks around a group of words limit the search by indicating you are looking for a specific phrase. For example, if you are looking for evidence that human behavior contributes to global warming, you might search "humans contribute to global warming," which would limit the search far beyond the simple human + global warming by specifying the point you seek to make.

information, but you may be less familiar with some of its specialized search engines. Three of these search engines can be particularly helpful to someone seeking to support their ideas in a speech: *Google Scholar*, *Google Books*, and *Google Images*.

*Research is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose.*  
~ Zora Neale Hurston

**Google Scholar**

The search engines listed earlier in this chapter will help you explore a diversity of sites to find the information you are looking for. However, certain topics and certain types of speeches call for more rigorous research. This research is typically best found in the library, but *Google* has an added feature that makes finding scholarly sources easier. On *Google Scholar* you can find research that has been published in scholarly journal articles, books, theses, conference proceedings, and court opinions.

*Google Scholar* is not only helpful for focusing on academic research; it has a host of features that will help to refine your search to the most helpful articles. You can search generally in *Google Scholar* and find citations of useful articles that will help support your ideas, but you may not always find the full text of the article. You can ask *Google Scholar* to help you find the full text articles available in your library's databases by telling it which library you want to search. To do this, click the "scholar preferences" link next to the search button on scholar.google.com. Then scroll down to the section titled "library links," and type the name of your school or library, then click "find library." When the search is complete, check the box next

to be used by most search engines (BBC, 2012).

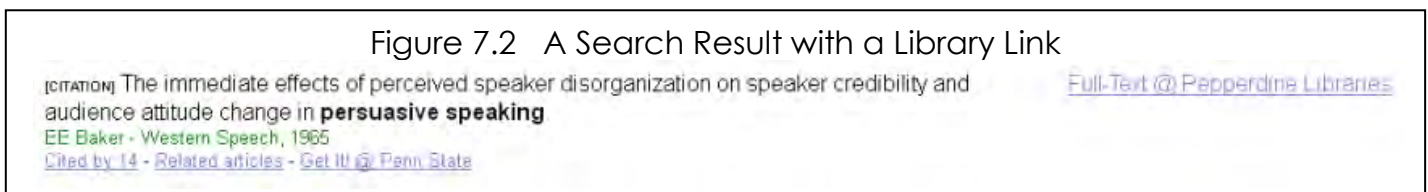
When you have a well-defined area of research, it is best to start as specific as possible and then broaden your search as needed. If there is something on exactly what you want to say, you don't want to miss it wading through a sea of articles on your general topic area. To make the best use of your search engine take some time to read the help section on the site and learn how their Boolean operators work. The

help section will offer additional tips to assist you in navigating the nuances of that site and executing the best possible search.

**Google**

You may be at least somewhat familiar with *Google*, the name that has become synonymous with "internet search," and called "the most used and most popular search engine" (Tajane, 2011). You may already be adept at searching *Google* for a wide variety of

Figure 7.2 A Search Result with a Library Link



to the name of your library so that *Google* knows to include it in the search. Once you have included your library, the search results you get will have links that lead you to the articles available in your library's databases (see Figure 7.2). Clicking the links will lead you to your library databases and prompt you to log into the system as you would if you were searching on the library site itself.

*I find I use the Internet more and more. It's just an invaluable tool. I do most of my research on the Net now...*  
~ Nora Roberts

Even when you are linked to your library's databases, there may be articles in your search results that you do not have electronic access to. In that case, search your library catalog for the title of the journal in which your desired article appears to see if they carry the journal in hard copy form. If you still cannot find it, copy the citation information and use your interlibrary loan system to request a copy of the article from another library.

In addition to enhancing your database searches, *Google Scholar* can also help you broaden your search in two strategic ways. First, underneath the citation for each search result, you will see a link to "related articles." If you found a particular article helpful, clicking "related articles" is one way to help you find resources that are similar. Second, as you know, researchers often look through the bibliography of a helpful source to find the articles that author used. However, when you are dealing with an older article, searching backwards in the bibliography may lead you to more outdated research. To search for more recent research, look again under the search result for the link called "cited by." Clicking the "cited by" link will give you all of the articles that have been published since, and have referred to, the article that you found. For example, if you are giving a speech on male body image you might

find Paul Rozin and April Fallon's 1988 article in the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* comparing opposite sex perceptions of weight helpful. However, it would be good to have more recent research. Clicking the "related articles" and "cited by" links would lead you to similar research published within the past few years.



### Google Books

Just as *Google Scholar* can be used to enhance your research in scholarly periodicals, *Google Books* can be used to make your search for, and within, books more efficient. Some library catalogs offer you the ability to search for all books on a topic, whether that library has the book or not. Other libraries confine you to searching their holdings. One way to enhance your research is to search for books on *Google Books* and then use your library site to see if they currently have the book, or if you will need to order it through interlibrary loan. The other way that you can use *Google Books* is to make your skimming more effective. Earlier in this chapter you learned that you should strategically skim books for the information that you need. You can do that with *Google Books* by looking up the book, and then using the search bar on the left side of the screen (see Figure 7.4) to search for key words within the book. This search engine can help you identify the pages in a

book where your terms appear and, with many books, give you a sample of that page to allow you to see whether the terms appear in the context you are searching for. Keep in mind that *Google Books* is a search engine; it is not a replacement for checking out the book in the library or buying your own copy. *Google Books* does not print books in their entirety, and often will omit pages surrounding a search result, so relying on the site to allow you to read enough of the book to make your argument is risky at best. Instead, use this site to help you determine which books to obtain, and which parts of those books will be most relevant to your research.

### Google Images

*Google Images* may be useful as you seek visual aids to illustrate your point. You can search *Google Images* for photographs, charts, illustrations, clip art and more. For example, if you are giving a speech on the Nineteenth Amendment, you could add interest by offering a picture of the Silent Sentinel's picketing the White House. Alternatively, if you wanted to demonstrate the statistical probability of electing a woman to Congress, you could use *Google Images* to locate a chart displaying that information.



Since search engines match the terms you put in, it is possible that your topic could yield images containing adult content. To prevent receiving adult content, you can use the "safe search" settings (located in the option wheel in the far upper right hand corner of the menu bar) to limit your exposure to



explicit images. The setting has three options:

1. **Strict filtering:** filters sexually explicit video and images from *Google Search* result pages, as well as results that might link to explicit content.

2. **Moderate filtering:** excludes sexually explicit video and images from *Google Search* result pages, but does not filter results that might link to explicit content. This is the default SafeSearch setting.

3. **No filtering:** as you've probably figured out, turns off SafeSearch filtering completely (*Google*, 2012).

Remember that, as with other outside sources, you will need to offer proper source citations for every image that you use. Additionally, if you plan to post your speech to the internet or publish it more widely than your class, consider using only images that appear in the public domain so that you do not risk infringing on an artist's copyright privileges.

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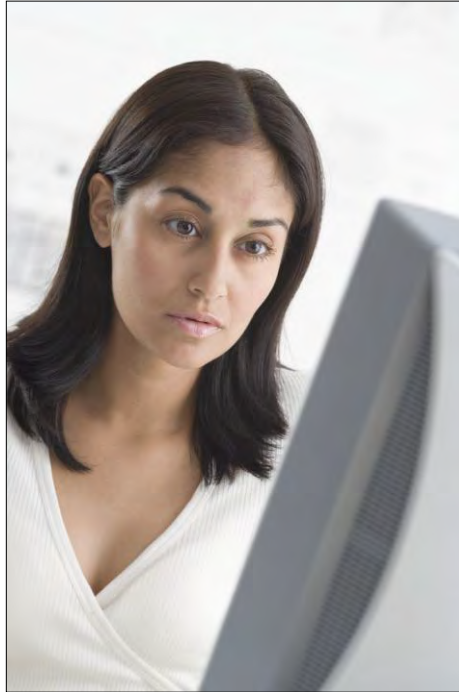
*It is not ignorance but knowledge which is the mother of wonder.*

~ *Joseph Wood Krutch*

### websites

When you use a more general search engine, such as *Google* or *bing*, you are looking for websites. Websites may be maintained by individuals, organizations, companies, or governments. These sites generally consist of a homepage, that gives an overview of the site and its purpose. From the homepage there are links to various types of information on the original site and elsewhere on the Internet. These sets of links arrange information "in an unconstrained web-like way" (Berners-Lee, 2000, p.3), which opens up the possibility of making new connections between ideas and research. It also opens up the possibility of getting lost among all of the available sources. To keep your research on track, be sure to continue

asking yourself if the sources you have found support your specific purpose statement.



Most websites are created to promote the interests of their owner, so it is very important that you check to see whose website you are looking at. Generally the author or owner of the site is named near the top of the homepage, or in the copyright notice at the bottom. Knowing who the site belongs to will help you determine the quality of the information it offers. If you find the site through a search engine and are not directed to its homepage, look for a link called "home" or "about" to navigate to the page containing more information about the site itself. In addition to knowing the owner, it is important to look for the author of the material you are using. For example, an article on a reputable news site like *CNN.com* may come from a respected journalist, or it may be the opinion of a blogger whose post is not necessarily vetted by the company itself. Use the section of the chapter on evaluating information to determine whether the site you have found is a credible source.

When you find websites that are both useful and credible, be sure to

bookmark them in your Web browser so that you can refer to them again later. Your browser may call these bookmarks "favorites" instead. To bookmark a site, you can click on the bookmarking link in your browser or, if your browser uses tabs, you can drag the tab into a toolbar near the top of the window. If you are struggling with the bookmarking process, try the command CTRL+D on your keyboard or consult the help link for your Web browser.

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*Don't leave inferences to be drawn when evidence can be presented.*

~ *Richard Wright*

### government documents

Governments regularly publish large quantities of information regarding their citizens, such as census data, health reports, and crime statistics. They also compile transcripts of legislative proceedings, hearings, and speeches. Most college and university libraries maintain substantial collections of government documents. Additionally, these documents are increasingly available online. Government documents can be helpful for finding up-to-date statistics on an issue that affects the larger population. They can also be helpful in identifying strong viewpoints concerning government policies. For example, looking at the Congressional testimony regarding nuclear safety after an earthquake destroyed the Fukushima nuclear power plant in Japan in 2011 could help you make a compelling case for safety upgrades at U.S. nuclear power facilities.

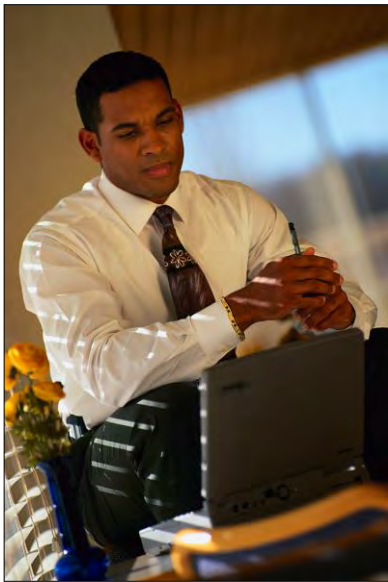
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*Now, whenever you read any historical document, you always evaluate it in light of the historical context.*

~ *Josh McDowell*

One of the most helpful resources for searching government documents is [www.fedworld.gov](http://www.fedworld.gov). This site allows

you to search Supreme Court decisions, government scientific reports, research and development reports, and other databases filled with cutting edge research. It also lists all major government agencies and their websites. Another excellent way to locate government documents is to use the Monthly Catalog of U.S. Government Publications. This index is issued every month and lists all of the documents published by the federal government, except those that are restricted or confidential. You can use the index to locate documents from Congress, the courts, or even the president. The index arranges reports alphabetically by the name of the issuing agency. The easiest way to search will be on the Government Printing Office website at [catalog.gpo.gov](http://catalog.gpo.gov). If you would prefer to work with hard copies of the reports, head to your library and search the subject index to find subjects related to your speech topic. Each subject will have a list of documents and their entry number. Use the entry numbers to find the title, agency, and call number of each document listed in the front of the index (Zarefsky, 2005).



### evaluating information

The large amount of information available in your library and on the Internet can seem overwhelming.

Narrow your support by evaluating the quality and credibility of each source. To determine the quality of a source, look to see whether the information provided seems comprehensive. To determine whether or not the information is comprehensive, check to see that it thoroughly covers the issue, considers competing perspectives, and cites the sources where supporting material came from.

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*The popular online encyclopedia, Wikipedia, is a great resource for general information. It is a good place to start in order to determine search terms and potentially relevant strains of thought on a given topic. However, it is not the most credible source to cite in your speech. Since anyone can update the site at any time, information may be entirely inaccurate. When using Wikipedia, look for source citations and follow the links to original source material.*

First, check to see that your source not only discusses issues that pertain to your topic, but thoroughly explains the reasoning behind the claims it offers. Often you will already be familiar with the topic, but you will require the addition of strong reasoning to properly support your ideas. If your source cannot provide strong reasoning, it is not the best quality source. Second, determine whether the source considers competing perspectives. Debate strategists know that evidence can be found for multiple perspectives on any issue. If your source does not also recognize and consider opposing arguments, it is not the best quality source. Third, check to see that your source offers supporting data and

citations for its arguments. If the source lacks relevant data to support its claims, does not include other citations,



or if it includes non-credible citations, it is not the best quality source. It is fine to use a source that is weak in one of these areas if you still find it compelling, but know that you may need to back it up with additional credible information. If the source is weak in multiple areas, do your best to avoid using it so that it does not weaken your speech.

In addition to the quality, you should examine **source credibility**. When evaluating credibility, focus on the sources' qualifications, the **parity** of their message with similar sources, and their biases. One of the most important elements of credibility is qualification. Sometimes qualifications will be linked to a person's profession. For example, if you are talking about earthquakes, you might want the expertise of a seismologist who studies earthquake waves and their effects. However, professional expertise is not the only type of credibility. If you want to discuss the feeling of experiencing a major earthquake, testimony from a survivor may be more credible than testimony from a scientist who studied the event but did not experience it. When examining credibility, check to see that the person has the training or experience appropriate to the type of information they offer. Next, check to see whether the information in your chosen source aligns with information in other sources on the issue. If your

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*I used to sleep nude –  
until the earthquake.  
~ Alyssa Milano*



source is the only one that offers a particular perspective, and no other source corroborates that perspective, it is less likely to be credible. Additionally, check for **bias**. All sources have bias, meaning they all come from a particular perspective. You must check to see whether the perspective of the source matches your own, and whether their perspective overwhelms their ability to offer reliable information on an issue. Also check to see whether the source is affiliated with organizations that are known to hold a particularly strong opinion concerning the issue they are speaking to.

In your speech, make reference to the quality and credibility of your sources. Identifying the qualifications for a source, or explaining that their ideas have been used by many other credible sources, will enhance the strength of your speech. For example, if you are giving a speech about the benefits of sleep, citing a renowned sleep expert will strengthen your argument. If you can then explain that this person's work has been repeatedly tested and affirmed by later studies, your argument will appear even stronger. On the other hand, if you simply offer the name of your source without any explanation of who that person is, or why they ought to be believed, your argument is suspect. To offer this kind of information without disrupting the flow of your speech, you might say something like:

*Mary Carskadon, Director of the Chronobiology/Sleep Research Laboratory at Bradley Hospital in Rhode Island, and Professor at the Brown University School of Medicine, explains that there are several advantages to increased amounts of sleep. . . Her work is supported by other researchers, like Dr. Kyla*

*Wahlstrom at the University of Minnesota whose study demonstrated that delaying school start times increased student sleep and their performance (National Sleep Foundation, 2011).*



This sample citation bolsters credibility by offering qualifications, and identifies multiple experts who agree on this issue. You may be tempted to stop once you have found one source that supports your idea, but continuing to research and comparing the information in each source will help you better support your ideas. It will also prevent you from overlooking contradictory evidence that you need to be able to address.



## citing sources and avoiding plagiarism

### style guides

Once you have gathered the appropriate sources to support your ideas, you will need to integrate citations for those sources into your speech using a **style guide** such as those published by the Modern Language Association (MLA), American Psychological Association (APA), or The Chicago Manual of Style (CMS). These style guides help you determine the format of your citations, both within the speech and in the bibliography. Your professor will likely assign a particular style guide for you to use. However, if you are not told to use a particular style, choose the one most appropriate to your area of study. MLA style is typically used by people in the humanities, APA is typically used by social scientists, and CMS can be used in either type of writing, but is most popular with historians (Miller-Cochran & Rodrigo, 2011). These style guides will help you record the places where you found support for your argument so that you can avoid plagiarism.

*Facts are stubborn things; and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passions, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence.*

~ John Adams

### plagiarism

**Plagiarism** is the act of presenting someone else's work or ideas as your own. Sometimes this is intentional, meaning people choose to copy from another source and make their audience think that the idea was original. Students in speech classes sometimes buy speeches from the internet, or repeat a speech written by a friend who took the class in a previous semester. These actions are cheating because the students did not do the work



themselves, yet they took credit for it. Most instances of blatant cheating, such as these, are quickly caught by instructors who maintain files of work turned in previously, or who are adept at searching the Internet for content that does not appear original to the student. Consequences for this type of plagiarism are severe, and may range from failure of the course to expulsion from the school.

More often, plagiarism occurs by mistake when people are not aware of how to properly summarize and cite the sources from which they took information. This happens when someone incorporates words or ideas from a source and fails to properly cite the source. Even if you have handed your professor a written outline of the speech with source citations, you must also offer oral attribution for ideas that are not your own (see Table 7.3 for examples of ways to cite sources while you are speaking).

Omitting the oral attribution from the speech leads the audience, who is not holding a written version, to believe that the words are your own. Be sure to offer citations and oral attributions for all material that you have taken from someone else, including paraphrases or summaries of their ideas. When in doubt, remember to “always provide oral citations for direct quotations, paraphrased material, or especially striking language, letting listeners know who said the words,



Table 7.3 Verbal Source Citations	
Proper Written Source Citation	Proper Oral Attribution
“Your time is limited, so don’t waste it living someone else’s life” (Jobs, 2005).	In his 2005 commencement address at Stanford University Steve Jobs said, “Your time is limited, so don’t waste it living someone else’s life.”
“Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants” (Pollan, 2009, p.1).	Michael Pollan offers three basics guidelines for healthy eating in his book, <i>In Defense of Food</i> . He advises readers to, “Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants.”
“The Assad regime’s escalating violence in Syria is an affront to the international community, a threat to regional security, and a grave violation of human rights. . . . this group should take concrete action along three lines: provide emergency humanitarian relief, ratchet up pressure on the regime, and prepare for a democratic transition” (Clinton, 2012).	In her February 24 speech to the Friends of Syria People meeting, U.S. Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, warned that Assad was increasing violence against the Syrian people and violating human rights. She called for international action to help the Syrian people through humanitarian assistance, political pressure, and support for a future democratic government.
“Maybe you could be a mayor or a Senator or a Supreme Court Justice, but you might not know that until you join student government or the debate team” (Obama, 2009).	In his 2009 “Back to School” speech President Obama encouraged students to participate in school activities like student government and debate in order to try out the skills necessary for a leadership position in the government.

where, and when” (Osborn & Osborn, 2007, p.23). Whether plagiarism is intentional or not, it is unethical and someone committing plagiarism will often be sanctioned based on their institution’s code of conduct.

### conclusion

Remember that in order to convince an audience and appear credible, you will need to offer support for each of your ideas. Gathering testimony from experienced and expert individuals will lend excitement and credibility to your speech. Combining testimony with resources from the library, such as books, periodicals, and reference material, will help you back up your ideas. Examining credible Internet resources can also enhance your speech by yielding the most up-to-date evidence for the points you hope to make. With so much information available it is possible to support almost any idea. However, you will need to take care to ensure that you

offer the highest quality and most credible support. Do this by gathering a variety of sources and comparing the information to make sure the support is consistent across sources, and that you have accounted for any possible contradictory information. As you integrate the sources into your speech, remember to ask: “Does this evidence support my specific purpose statement?” and “Is this evidence appropriate for my audience?” Also, don’t forget to offer written and oral attribution for each idea. Using the various resources available you will likely find more evidence than you can possibly incorporate into one speech. These questions will assist you as you refine your support and craft the most compelling speech possible.

*Accuracy is the twin brother of honesty; inaccuracy, of dishonesty.*

~ Nathaniel Hawthorne



## module review questions and activities

### review questions

1. For each of the claims below, identify the most compelling form of evidence that the speaker might offer. List as many as you can think of.
  - a. Photo-retouching alters our perspective on beauty.
  - b. The Internet is an effective protest tool.
  - c. Body scanners in airports are detrimental to our health.
2. You are giving a speech about the importance of legislation banning text messaging while driving. You want to offer diverse support for your argument that the legislation is necessary. What research tools would you use to find the following forms of evidence?
  - a. A personal narrative concerning the effects of texting while driving.
  - b. An academic study concerning the effects of texting while driving.
  - c. Existing legislation regarding cell phone use in automobiles.
  - d. A visual aid for your speech.
3. Checking the quality of your evidence is an important step in refining support for your argument. What are three elements that you should look for when determining source quality? Why is each element necessary?
4. You are giving a speech about bed bugs. You point out that bed bugs are a common pest that can be found almost anywhere. You have found a variety of sources for your speech including a bed bug registry website where people can report seeing bed bugs in hotels, an encyclopedia entry on bed bugs, a blog containing pictures and personal testimony about an experience with bed bugs, a scientific study on the conditions under which bed bugs thrive, and a psychological study concerning the way that people are conditioned to respond to the sight of bugs in their bed. Which of these is the most credible source to support your point? Why?
5. The following is an excerpt from John F. Kennedy's 1963 Civil Rights Address. Read the excerpt, and offer your own paraphrase of his ideas without incorporating any direct quotations from the text:

*I hope that every American, regardless of where he lives, will stop and examine his conscience about this and other related incidents. This Nation was founded by men of many nations and backgrounds. It was founded on the principle that all men are created equal, and that the rights of every man are diminished when the rights of one man are threatened (Kennedy, 1963).*

6. Imagine you are giving a speech on \_\_\_\_\_ [fill in the blank]. Write a potential specific purpose statement. Then identify three types of research that you would integrate in order to offer balanced and compelling support for your statement.

## activities

1. Get to know your library. Use your library website to determine the name of the librarian who works with your major, or in the area of your speech topic. This activity is not designed for you to get the librarian to do your work for you, but rather for you to get to know the librarian better and make them a partner in your research process. Make an appointment with that person and interview them concerning the best way to conduct research for your speech. Take a summary of the assignment, your specific purpose statement, and at least one source that you have already found for your speech. Be sure to ask the following questions:
  - a. What types of sources would you advise me to focus on in my search for supporting materials?
  - b. What search terms are likely to yield results that are relevant to my specific purpose statement?
  - c. Can you offer any tips that will make searching this particular library easier?
2. Using the topics below, or your own speech topic, practice developing productive search terms. Begin by brainstorming synonyms for the topic. Then, consider other concepts that are closely related to the topic. Using those terms, conduct a preliminary search in the search engine of your choice. Skim the content on the 3-5 most promising results and highlight common terms and phrases that appear on each page. Those common terms and phrases should help you narrow your searches as you move forward with your research.
  - a. National Security
  - b. Alternative Energy
  - c. Economic Stability
  - d. Media Piracy
  - e. Privacy
  - f. Local Events
3. Using one of the topics listed in the previous activity, conduct a search on the topic using identical search terms in Google Images, Google Scholar, and Google Books. For each search, identify the source that you think would best support a speech on the topic. Cite each source using a consistent style guide (MLA, APA, or Chicago), and offer your evaluation of the sources' relevance, quality, and credibility.
4. Watch Stephen Colbert's report concerning Wikipedia or search "wikiality" if the link does not work ([http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=20PIHx\\_JjEo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=20PIHx_JjEo)). Using research that you have found on your speech topic, update the Wikipedia page for your topic. Be careful not to replicate the errors that Colbert discusses. Offer only accurate information, and cite the source where support for your entry can be found.



## **glossary**

### **Bias**

The predisposition toward a particular viewpoint.

### **Boolean Operators**

Words and symbols that illustrate the relationship between search terms and help the search engine expand or limit results.

### **Expert Testimony**

Testimony that comes from a recognized authority who has conducted extensive research on an issue.

### **Interlibrary Loan**

The process of borrowing materials through one library that belong to another library.

### **Lay Testimony**

Any testimony based on witnesses' opinions or perceptions in a given case

### **Parity**

Similarity of information across sources.

### **Personal Testimony**

An individual's story concerning his or her lived experience, which can be used to illustrate the existence of a particular event or phenomenon.

### **Rapport**

A cordial relationship between two or more people in which both parties convey respect and understanding for one another.

### **Search Engine**

Software which uses algorithms to scan an index of existing Internet content for particular terms, and then ranks the results based on their relevance.

### **Source Credibility**

Signs that a person is offering trustworthy information.

### **Specific Purpose Statement**

A sentence summarizing the main idea, or claim, which the speech will support. It should be stated clearly toward the beginning of the speech.

### **Style Guide**

An established set of standards for formatting written documents and citing sources for information within the document.

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