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**Grace Van Dyke Bird Library****Library Survival Skills For New College Students**

***Your high school seniors are our college freshmen. These skills are what they need to succeed:***

1. **Students need practice refining research questions.** This involves coming up with an idea and starting with background reading in reference materials to shape or change their thesis. [Empire State College SUNY—Developing a Research Question](#) or [Purdue Online Writing Lab—Developing a Thesis Statement](#)
2. **Students need familiarity with a variety of types of sources their professors will require them to use: reference works, books, periodicals, web sites, etc.** They should know how to locate these sources, retrieve and use information from all of these types of sources. [UCLA College Library—Selecting the Right Source](#) or [UC Irvine Libraries—The Information Process](#)
3. **College students need to know about the different kinds of periodicals, journals, and magazines.** Professors require even lower-division students to read and comment on peer reviewed articles. Students should know the meaning of peer-reviewed, journal, serial, periodical, scholarly, etc. [University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee—Periodicals](#) or [Castleton State College—Periodical Articles](#)
4. **College students need to know how to effectively access and utilize databases.** This includes citing databases and understanding the various types of media available on databases. [Boston University—Surfing or Researching?](#)
5. **College students need to know how to create search statements for online sources.** They need to understand the difference between subject heading and keywords searching in a library catalog or database. They should be able to do advanced searching in a free search engines (Google). Students should know Boolean search terms (and, or, not) and how they work, as well as how to use limiters. [Transitioning to College—Talking to Databases](#) or [Southern Utah University Library—Database Searching Tips](#)
6. **It's essential for students not to just use Google for research.** Students should understand what the differences are between the visible and the invisible web. Many professors will NOT let students use only non-subscription Internet sources. [LaGuardia Community College—Beyond Google: The Invisible Web](#)
7. **College students must know how to evaluate resources and to use the best resources possible.** This entails more than knowing the difference

between .gov and .com. [University of Albany Libraries—Evaluating Internet Sites 101](#)

8. **Students also need exposure to making citations for at least books, periodical articles, and database resources.** Sure, there are citation builders, but they don't always work that well, and it takes practice to do citations correctly. [University of North Carolina at Greensboro—Citing in MLA Style](#)
9. **Students must know how to use in-text citations.** Most incoming freshmen students just know parenthetical—end of the sentence—citations. This drives professors crazy. **Students must be familiar with at least one style: MLA, APA, Chicago, etc.** [Duke University Libraries—MLA In-Text Parenthetical Citations](#) or [University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill—MLA: Objectives](#)
10. **Students simply must know enough about plagiarism to avoid committing it.** Many colleges have very stiff penalties for all forms of academic dishonesty. Students should understand the nuances of summarizing, paraphrasing, quoting, etc. and that ALL require citations. [Vaughn Memorial Library Acadia University—You Quote It, You Note It!](#) or [University of Maine at Farmington—Is It Plagiarism?](#)
11. **Students should be comfortable using online library catalogs to find information.** High school library catalogs are often very different from university catalogs. **Most college libraries use the Library of Congress Classification system; most high schools use Dewey.** Either way, students need to know what a call number is and how to use a map of the library to find different locations. [University of Pittsburgh—Library of Congress Call Number System](#) or [University System of Georgia—A Library Tour](#)
12. **There's more in a college library than books.** College libraries often have materials on reserve for specific classes, like textbooks and study guides. Many college libraries lend equipment, like graphing calculators. Nearly all college libraries offer online access to articles from magazines, journals, and newspapers; most also offer some books online. [Bakersfield College Library Home Page](#)
13. **College libraries often offer online tutorials and/or orientation classes.** Even though students may feel overwhelmed, they should take the time to utilize these resources to learn more about the campus library. [Bakersfield College Library Research Workshops](#) or [Humboldt State University Library—Research Roadmap](#)
14. **College libraries employ Reference Librarians!** Reference librarians are there to help students to find the best possible resources and save time. Nobody expects students to know where everything is in the library, so they should feel comfortable asking questions—by phone, email, or in person. [Washington Post--Got a Research Paper to Write? Friend a Librarian](#)

An additional practical site: [UCLA Libraries Assignment Calculator](#)

These tips are adapted from a list compiled by Academic (i.e. College) Librarians and were retrieved from the Information Literacy Instruction Discussion List (hosted on the American Library Association server, sponsored by the Instruction Section of the Association of College and Research Libraries).

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