Organize Your Ideas about Your Topic
I am studying...

Because I want to find out...

In order to help my reader understand...

Tips for Making Research Easier
1. Write down keywords of important places, people, or concepts. Start with what you know.
2. Flesh out a timeline of your topic.
3. Look for specific pieces of information that come from diverse sources.

Think Critically When Using Sources
WHO: Author/Sponsor of the Information
   - An internet source may leave breadcrumbs to a more authoritative source. Use the library to follow those leads.
WHAT: Accuracy/Reliability/Objectivity/Bias of the Information
WHEN: Timeliness of the Information
WHY: Purpose of the source: Inform / Persuade / Advocate / Entertain / Sell

Recommended Sites to Start Your Research
- Google led an initiative to digitize older newspapers. https://news.google.com/newspapers
- Molstead Library has digitized NIC student newspapers, yearbooks and scrapbooks. www.nic.edu/library > The Walden History Project
- Search the Idaho Yesterdays – Article Index library research guide for relevant local scholarship.

Explore Molstead Library Collections Using Primo
Find books, videos, or articles on your topic. Go to www.nic.edu/library
- Limit your search to specific item types by using the options above the search results.

Library of Congress Classification System Basics
Each item is categorized in a class, subclass, and subsection.
Example: F is the class letter for History of the Americas
F 746 .C58 1990
   History of the Americas
   Subsection for Idaho General Works, Histories
   “Cutter number” for author’s last name
   Year of publication

Browse the entire Idaho collection in F 741 – F 755
• **REMEMBER!** You may need to “think outside the box” when searching for books in a catalog, since you are not searching the book’s complete text! Use the books’ table of contents and indexes to see more detailed information.

• **Did you find a book located in “NIC Special Collections”?** Ask a library staff member to retrieve the item to use in the library.

**Consult Subject-Specific Databases for Additional Sources**

**Find Articles > Databases by Title/Subject/Type**

Databases can include newspaper, magazine or journal articles, e-books and other items. Skim the database descriptions to determine if the database would include relevant sources for your “institution.”

- Overwhelmed? Try EbscoHost’s Academic Search Complete, America: History and Life with Full Text, or History Reference Center.
- Select coverage of the Coeur d’Alene Press (2003-present) and The Spokesman Review (1994-present) is available from the NewsBank database.

**Database Research Like a Pro!**

When using databases, combine research keywords as *search equations* to be most efficient and effective. Search equations always run from left to right.

- Use **AND** to search keywords with independent meanings.
- Use **OR** to search keywords with similar meanings.
- Use “quotation marks” to search for phrases.
- Use (parentheses) to combine keyword combinations with other keywords.

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**Meet with a Librarian** (208-769-3265)

During library hours, visit or call the Molstead Library Information Desk. Drop-ins are welcome!

- **Monday-Thursday** 7:30 a.m. – 9 p.m.
- **Friday** 7:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
- **Closed** Saturday
- **Sunday** 1 p.m. – 8 p.m.

If you prefer to schedule a face-to-face or virtual appointment, email librarian@nic.edu