Research Plan

Part I - Important Information

Name of Class: ____________________  First draft due: ____________________

Professor: ________________________  Final draft due: ____________________

Special Parameters?
Below, list requirements like number or type of sources, as well as the required page or word count:

_____________________________________________________________________________________

Citation Style?   MLA 8     MLA 7     APA     Chicago     Other ______

Part II - Key Concepts, Search Terms, and Subject Areas

1) Write your topic/thesis statement (or the question you need to answer) below:
   Example: Fast food causes health risks in children.
   Why is this important? We often start researching before we know exactly what we’re looking for. This will save you time, and will help you organize your thoughts.

   __________________________________________________________________________________

2) Determine your key concepts and list them below:
   Example: fast food, health risks, children
   Why is this important? When you have a clear view of your search terms, you can begin researching as soon as you sit down at the computer.

   __________________________________________________________________________________

3) List 2-3 related terms for each of your key concepts below:
   Example: takeout, McDonald’s, kids, boys, girls, diabetes, childhood obesity, high cholesterol
   Why is this important? Different words can mean the same thing, and authors use varying terms. So, it is useful to think of synonyms, broader terms, or more specific terms.

   __________________________________________________________________________________
4) **List any subject areas for this topic below:**
   
   *Example: health science, exercise science, food science, sociology*
   
   *Why is this important?* Many topics cover broad subjects, so it’s important to narrow your focus depending on how long your paper should be and what your professor expects of you.

5) **Now, determine which of the subject areas above you would like to explore for your project.**
   
   *Example: health science* (for longer papers, your professor may want you to have more than 1)
   
   *Why is this important?* Determining the subject area (or discipline) for a topic can help you determine which subject databases to use. Additionally, the Library Summon search allows you to narrow search results based on subject areas and disciplines. This can result in a more focused and relevant search. For links to Subject Databases and Summon, see blue box below.

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**Part III - Research Strategies: Advanced Searching**

Looking at numbers 2 and 3 on the previous page, select a sequence of search terms that you think could yield a good amount of results.

*Suggestions:*

- Use **AND** to combine multiple terms:
  - health risks **AND** children **AND** fast food
  - Diabetes **AND** fast food **AND** kids

- Use **OR** to combine similar or related terms:
  - Childhood obesity **AND** McDonald’s **OR** fast food

6) **List your search term sequences below:**

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- **Subject Databases:** [https://libguides.marshall.edu/az.php](https://libguides.marshall.edu/az.php)
  
  Library Homepage → All Databases → All Subjects drop-down menu → select your chosen subject area

- **Summon Advanced Search:** [http://marshall.summon.serialssolutions.com/advanced#!/advanced](http://marshall.summon.serialssolutions.com/advanced#!/advanced)
  
  Library homepage → Summon Search [on left side of screen] → Advanced Search → enter search terms