

Finding the *BEST*



information for your studies

INTO[®] MANCHESTER

When you are doing your coursework at INTO Manchester, you should make use of **QUALITY** sources, rather than just using *Wikipedia*

If you are struggling to find what you need - ask the Learning Centre staff. They like to help!

This handout will help!

Learning Centre, Guide 17B
(RCS/IYO/ PMP)

Website: <http://intolearningcentre.co.uk>

E-mail: manchester.lrc@intoglobal.com

Telephone: 0161 631 12 22



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What sources of information should you use for your assignments?

- Do **NOT** just use Google and accept the results you find!
- Do **NOT** use Wikipedia as the main source of your information for your studies; you can use it to get an understanding/ overview of the subject but use it **carefully** and check the source of the information that Wikipedia gives.
- **You should make use of information that you can trust– that is, information that is reliable and truthful**

Whether you are using a book, newspaper, magazine or website, **you need to follow the RADAR test!**

Check the following:

R *What is the reason for writing the work?* **R**

Is the information produced by an organisation who is trying to sell you something?

Are they trying to get you to believe in a particular viewpoint? (so the information may be biased) What is their “agenda”?

Think about the “style” the information is written in

Are the writers trying to get you to believe in a particular viewpoint? (so the information may be biased) What is their “agenda”?

Think about the language used.

Is it emotive? For example, with newspapers, **tabloid newspapers** often use sensational language, usually about celebrities and sport, often poorly written and with a lack of detail.

Always ask
for help if
you are stuck!



Examples of tabloids include: *Daily Mirror*, *Daily Mail*, *Daily Express*, *the Metro*, *The Sun*.

Try and use “**broadsheet**” **newspapers** that use professional journalists and work within professional guidelines. Examples of broadsheets include *The Guardian*, *The Independent* (now online only) and *The Times*

Has the information been written as a joke/ hoax/ or to steal money?

This can be particularly true of websites as anyone can set up a website; many websites offer no evidence for facts and views; some websites are hoaxes or fiction.

For example, see <http://zapatopi.net/treeoctopus/>

A Who wrote the information? Do they have Authority? A

Who is the writer or publisher? Do you trust them?

Does the writer have good subject knowledge?

For example are they a University professor, teacher, politician, business person, writing about a topic in their subject area?

For books, check the back of the book– is there any information there about the author?

Look at the information you have found – think of it as a Court of Law!

Has the author offered any **PROOF** for what they are saying?

Does the piece of work include a reading list or bibliography?

Throughout the article or book, does the writer tell you what works were used to support any findings?

Has the information been “peer-reviewed”? This means the work has been read and judged by other experts to be a valid piece of work.

At University level, you should only be using academic articles that have been scholarly peer-reviewed

Check also:

Who is the publisher?

(a publisher is a company or person that prepares and issues books, or journals for sale)

Is the publisher a well-known or respected publisher? (for example, a University publisher such as Manchester University Press, or Oxford University Press.)

Other examples of publishers include: Macmillan, Hodder, Pearson's, Penguin, Longmans). Is the publisher a member of the Publishers Association? (<http://www.publishers.org.uk>)

Check that the publisher's name is not the same as the author's. This is often a sign that no one else would produce the book and is called "**vanity publishing**".

For websites: look at the URL to see if it from a source you trust:

Check its web address or URL for clues.

For example: **.ac** or **.edu** at the end of a URL shows that it is a website from an educational institution

.gov at the end of a URL shows that it is a website from a governmental institution

.org at the end of a URL shows that it is a website from a not-for-profit organisation or charity

co. or **.com** or **.net** Can be anything! So you are advised to "Google" the website to see if it has been reported as a fake.



Always check the website address/ URL carefully. Is it an academic website or a hoax one?

D **How old is the book/ website? What is the date?** **D**

You usually need up-to-date information unless it is a classic book on a subject or historical analysis of a topic.

Is the date of the work acceptable for your needs?

A **What clues** can you get from the **appearance** of the work? **A**

Does the information look serious and professional?

Is it written in formal, academic language?

Does it have citations and references?

R **Is the information relevant (suitable) for your work** **R**

Does the information found actually match your topic? For example, if you have been asked to find information about adults, is it **RELEVANT** to be reading information about children?

Or if you have been asked for information about Britain, is it **RELEVANT** to be reading information about China or Russia?

Is it at the right-level for your needs? Is it at professor-level (**too hard**) or at child-level (**too easy**) Is the information what you need to make your project stronger

Remember: R.A.D.A.R.



**Make life easy for yourself:
4 simple steps**

Step 1) Use the special academic databases bought by INTO Manchester!

These special databases cover information **written with authority** by academics, specialists and experts.

All INTO Manchester electronic resources are accessed using the **Open Athens** link on our website

<http://intolearningcentre.co.uk/online-resources/>

Click on the OpenAthens logo

Use your **OpenAthens Username** and **Password** to log in.

If you do not have a username/ password, come into the Learning Centre and ask staff

You can pick up guides online and from the Learning Centre to use these INTO Manchester databases effectively and efficiently; guides include:

- **Ebsco Databases** (Guide 7a and 7b)
- **The Reviews** (Simple Guides 11 –16)
- **E-Books** (Simple Guide 17 & 18)
- **Issues Online** (Simple Guide 19)

**Remember:
RADAR test!**

**Reason Authority
Date Appearance
Relevancy**

Step 2) Use high-quality websites only

As a minimum, when searching the web, you should be making use of search engines such as **Google Scholar** (<http://scholar.google.co.uk/>) rather than Google itself so you know you will find some “scholarly”/ academic literature.

It is also recommended that you make use of “**Open Access Gateways**” that contain web resources that have been quality checked by subject experts. Below are some gateways you might find of use for your research:

- **CORE (COnnecting REpositories)** Free access to millions of open access research papers <https://core.ac.uk/search/>
- **Digital Commons Network** Brings together free, full-text scholarly articles from hundreds of universities and colleges worldwide <http://network.bepress.com/>
- **Directory of Open Access Journals** Gives access to some very useful “peer reviewed” journals for you to use. This means that articles have been checked by fellow experts. Suitable for those carrying out in-depth research <https://www.doaj.org/> (**Also available via Ebsco Discovery**)
- **JURN** Finds content in over 4,000 FREE ‘open access’ e-journals in the arts and humanities. Provides a useful list of the journals included <http://www.jurn.org/>

Step 3) Pick up the guides with websites that have already been checked

All guides are available online at

<https://intolearningcentre.co.uk/useful-links/> and in the Learning Centre. Guides include:

Finding Company Information (Guide 18)

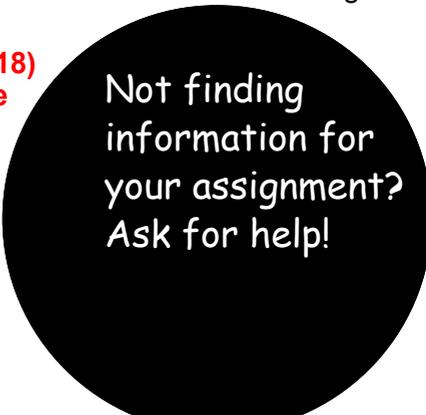
Finding Information on Politics (Guide 19)

Finding Information on Economics and Business (Guide 20)

Finding Information on Accounting and Finance (Guide 21)

Finding Information on the Sciences (Guide 22)

Finding Information on Marketing (Guide 23)



Not finding
information for
your assignment?
Ask for help!

Finding Information on Management & Organisational Behaviour (Guide 24)
Finding Information on Mathematics (Guide 32)

Step 4) Learn how to search effectively

Want more practice on working out if you can trust the information you find? Be like a detective and take the Sherlock Challenge!

Go to **Skills for Success** in VLE/ Moodle (go to Learning Centre website at <http://intolearningcentre.co.uk/> and click Moodle link) You should already be enrolled in the Skills for Success module
Look for **Be like a Detective: you can be Sherlock!**



Searching in the Library

All libraries (including INTO Manchester, the University of Manchester, Manchester Metropolitan University and Manchester Central Library) have a library catalogue available online, listing all the books they have. INTO Manchester Library Catalogue is found at: <https://intolearningcentre.co.uk/library/>

Each book has a number (**Dewey number**) which tells you where it is in the library. Dewey numbers are also called **class numbers** or **shelfmarks**.

Checklist to help you find the book/s you want:

- Make a note of the **shelfmark (class number/ Dewey number)** number from the catalogue
- Check how many copies are available on the catalogue
- Is the book/s on loan to somebody else?
- Is the book/s a reference copy? (**this means you cannot take it out of the library**)
- Is the book/s an e-book (electronic book)? This means it will not be on the shelf and you need to go online to read it.

You will soon get to know the Dewey numbers of the subjects you are studying. The main numbers are given below:

Main Dewey Subject Numbers

000 Computer Science, Information and General Works

100 Philosophy and Psychology

200 Religion

300 Social Sciences. **Includes 320 Politics, 330 Economics**

400 Language. **Includes 428.24 Studying English**

500 Science. **Includes 530 Physics, 540 Chemistry, 574 Biology
510 Mathematics**

600 Technology. **Includes 650 Business, 658 Management**

700 Art and Recreation. **Includes 746.92 Design**

800 Literature

900 History and Geography

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