A flow chart of how the research process may go

Basic information about topic: reference sources, brief persuasive or informative sources (Phase 1)

Possible positions and their supporting points: arguments supporting various viewpoints. Remember that even if you’re sure of your own position, you need to know what support other positions have in order to effectively present your case to them or to neutral parties. (Phase 2)

Compile and assess evidence supporting points: Independent, informative sources and/or synthesize information in sources making different arguments. (Phase 3)

New points or questions may come up

Sources may point to other useful sources

Figure out what points can be supported and what can’t (yet), what values or beliefs are informing viewpoints. Do you need more ideas or information? Do you have good quality sources to represent viewpoints and support points?

Stop when you know everything there is to know—or the deadline is here!