

# How to Conduct Website Searches and Notetaking

## 1. Clarify Your Search – What are you looking for?

Before you conduct a search determine what you are using a database to find – is it a particular person? place? fact? statistic? date?

Example – Asked to do research about daily life in the Crusades....

Ask yourself:

- Is there a particular person I want to find - **Godfrey of Bouillon**
- Is there a particular place I want to look up - **Jerusalem**
- Is there an important fact(s) I want to start my search with - **reasons Crusades were started**
- Is there a specific date or period I will search for – **First Crusade 1096-99**

Next, when preparing to do searches, you might need to change what you use as search criteria to find what you are looking for. Think about other keywords, synonyms, alternative phrases or other questions to consider about your topic.

Example: **Godfrey of Bouillon** = Crusade leader - **keywords**

Jerusalem = Holy Land – **synonym**

Reasons Crusades started = Pope's reason for calling for Crusades – **alternative phrases**

Who was Godfrey of Bouillon? = Who were important leaders in the First Crusade? – **other questions**

## 2. Search

Now use those key search words, phrases, etc. and begin your first search.

Ways to maximize your search results:

Use quotation marks around your search

Consider using the “advanced” search function to addition additional keywords

### 3. Delve – Go Beyond the First Page

Visit Melbourne - Melbourne Zoo | Zoos Victoria ← website title  
<https://www.zoo.org.au/melbourne> ▼ ← URL  
Journey through a world of wildlife in the heart of Melbourne. ← description/tagline

Plan your visit  
Zoo map - Getting here - Keeper  
Talks - Where to eat - Accessibility

Animals ← sitelinks  
Find out more about our zoo animals at Melbourne Zoo.

Close-up Encounters  
Melbourne Zoo's Close-up Encounters will bring you face ...

Buy tickets  
Buy tickets to Werribee · Buy tickets to Melbourne · Buy ...

What's on  
New exhibits, events and programs at Melbourne Zoo.

Wild encounters  
Experience the thrill of a Wild Encounter at Melbourne Zoo ...

[More results from zoo.org.au »](#) ← brings up additional listings

Consider what a Google search page shows you:

Examine the GREEN LINKS and look where each site will take you. Using the EVALUATE tools below choose non-ad, non-commercial sites to start your search.

If the first page is not providing accurate results, consider that this page usually consists of:

- Paid advertisement links
- Sites that use SEO (algorithms) to get their sites to the top page (whether they are helpful or not)
- Google's interpretation of your search (with bias, but necessarily accurate)

### 4. Evaluate

Using the CRAAP Method (see Evaluation Websites II) for more information, select the best sources for information.

## 5. Cite

When taking notes, if you are recording a **direct phrase** from a source put quotation marks around it.

Include:

- author
- title of page
- title of website
- website name
- website URL
- date you accessed the page

When recording information that is not a direct quote then:

- use alternative phrases
- collect keywords, people, places, dates, etc.
- summarize paragraphs in your own words – what was each paragraph's main point?