|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |
| Title | **Academic Library Visit** |
| **Due Date** | **Due Wednesday** |
| Where to Post | Click on "New Post" button above and type your response in the space provided below.  Click Save. |
| Subject | Your Name / Academic Library Visit |
| Points | 10 |
| Criteria | * Comments reflect careful observation of the library you visited. * Identify at least two *subject* encyclopedias appropriate to your topic. * Identify several books on your topic |
| Objective | Visit a library to discover the services, resources and tools available there; look for books and encyclopedia articles that may become a part of your final project. |

#### **Step One: Reading to prepare for this assignment**

The call number is the address of a book which is unique just as the address of your home is unique. Usually, public libraries use the Dewey Decimal Classification System to organize their books/DVDs etc. by call number. Usually, academic libraries use the Library of Congress Classification System to organize their books/DVDs etc. by call number. Below you will read about the Library of Congress system. The systems of public and academic libraries both organize the library collection by SUBJECT. For a variety of reasons, though, public and academic libraries go about it differently.

Read *Understanding Call Numbers*: [http://www.calstatela.edu/library/guides/call numbers.htm](http://www.calstatela.edu/library/guides/callnumbers.htm)

#### **Step Two: Prepare to visit an academic library**

#### **Print this assignment and your topic proposal to take to the library!**

**Important Note** Read all of the instructions carefully before you go. Pay special attention to directions at end. You may go to any academic library that is convenient for you, but it must be a library that is part of a community college or four year college. If you visit a community college, you will be able to check out books.

**This assignment is intended to accomplish the following:**

* Orient you to the services, information sources, and organization of an academic library
* Help you begin to make the bridge between what you know about your topic and the kinds of information that might support your research
* Locate subject encyclopedia articles related to your topic
* Locate the books you discovered in the "Library Catalog Assignment."

Your goal is to notice what the library has done to make information more accessible to you. What are people doing? What seems to be the purpose of the service points, tools, and systems? How can the library help you? Be sure to reflect on these questions and ask questions you have about what you saw when you write your weekly email journal.

#### **Step Three: Academic Library Tour**

Use this checklist to take notes as you explore. Use a separate sheet and number your answers. Consider each question carefully and write down your answers in your own words. There are no "wrong" answers if you fairly describe what you see.

1. What do you see at the library entrance? Are there any helpful signs or rules posted? Are there maps, user guides, or other handouts to pick up?
2. Locate the reference desk. Is there only one or does your library have a reference desk in each department or building? In any case, go to the main reference desk and look around. Are there any library user guides displayed? Are there special information sources nearby? What is happening at the reference desk?
3. Go to the reference collection and browse it a bit. (Usually located near the reference desk).
   * How is the collection organized? What kinds of materials do you find there? How are these materials useful for a researcher? Browse the shelves to get a sense of what might be available that relates to your topic. Ask a librarian to show you some good places to start.
   * Find the general encyclopedias (Usually near the beginning of the Reference Collection). If you have not used a print encyclopedia yet, compare what you found in the Britannica Online encyclopedia with a similar article in a print encyclopedia.
4. Ask a librarian to show you where to find *subject* encyclopedias related to your topic. For example, if you are interested in the ethical issues related to genetically modified foods, you might look at the *Encyclopedia of Bioethics*.
5. Find the circulating collection. In most libraries this is the largest collection where most of the books can be found.
   * How is the collection organized?
   * How large is the circulating collection?
   * Using the call numbers you wrote down for the library catalog assignment, go to the shelves to find some books related to your topic. Try to find the exact books you listed and then look for other related books. Find out if you can check out the books you find. If you can’t, you should take notes about the books so you can consider using them for your project.
6. Find the periodicals collection.
   * How is the collection organized?
   * What kinds of materials do you find there?
   * How are these materials useful for a researcher?
   * Are there any signs, services, tools or guides that would help a researcher use this collection?
   * Are there databases you can get to from your home computer?
7. Find out whether your library has a separate audio-visual collection (also called AV or Media Services)? If so,
   * What kind of materials can be found here?
   * How is the collection organized?
   * Is it open or closed stacks?
   * Who is allowed to use it?
   * Are there any rules associated with its use?
   * Does the library provide AV equipment to check out? To use in the library?
   * Are there any special guides or databases to help you locate materials on a particular subject?
8. Look for other collections available in the library.
   * Are there any special collections or files that could be useful to you in this library?
   * Is there a section for government publications? If so, how are they organized?
   * Is there a Reserve Collection? If so, what is its purpose?

#### **Step Four: Post Your Experience**

Review the notes that you took as you answered the questions above. Then compose a summary of your experience including the following information:

* Which library did you explore? When?
* How much time did you spend at the library?
* What is the name of the Reference Librarian you talked with?
* What library school did s/he graduate from?
* What do you think of the library's general architecture and organization?
* Was the staff of the library friendly and useful or otherwise?
* What resources did you discover that might be especially helpful?
* What useful things did you learn about libraries and their resources?
* What useful resources and ideas did you find for your topic?
* What was the best thing that happened during or from your library trip?
* Did you run into problems?
* Do you have any questions?

Write your response as an ESSAY. Make it at least the equivalent of one double-spaced page (500 words) in length.