



Speech Topics & Sources

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Choosing Speech Topics

Congressional Research Service Reports

Online: <http://www.thememoryhole.org/crs/>

The Congressional Research Service supports congressional legislation by providing research and analysis on topics of interest to legislators. There are more than 200 reports on topic ranging from “Afghanistan” to “Global Climate Change,” the “War on Drugs” and many others.

CQ Researcher

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Congressional Quarterly’s CQ Researcher gives in-depth coverage of timely issues. Published 44 times a year, each report (about 20 pages) includes related topics, dissenting opinions, chronologies, and a bibliography. Prior to May 10, 1991, the CQ Researcher is known as Editorial Research Reports (call numbers vary).

The National Academies

Online: <http://www.nationalacademies.org/>

The National Academies is the combined website of the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Engineering, National Institute of Medicine, and the National Research Council. The “Topics” section at the top of the page leads to thousands of online articles on scientific issues.

Newshour Index

Online: http://www.pbs.org/newshour/newshour_index.html

Topically arranged background reports and news transcripts from PBS.

Public Agenda Online

Online: <http://www.publicagenda.org/>

Founded in 1975, Public Agenda is a “nonpartisan, nonprofit public opinion research and citizen education organization.” The “Issue Guides” section of the site presents overviews and public opinion on the topics covered.

Speakout.com

Online: <http://speakout.com/activism/issues/>

Speakout.com bills itself as “America’s leading non-partisan Internet activism web site and online opinion research company.” The Issues section of the site gives linked information arranged by topic and representing a variety of viewpoints.

Finding Information

Books

To search for books, use the **Keyword Search** tab in the **library catalog**. Try using one or more keywords to describe your topic. If the keywords are too broad, you may get too many records. Should this happen, try combining keywords to narrow the search. If your keywords are too narrow or describe very recent events, you may get few or no records. In this case, you might need to use a broader but related term.

Reference Sources

Treat reference sources like **atlases, dictionaries, directories, encyclopedias** and the others listed on your “Gathering Supporting Materials Exercise” as if they were keywords and combine them with your topic keywords. Remember that the very broadest topics are the most likely to have reference sources. For example,

American Indians AND directories

crime AND encyclopedias

food AND dictionaries

Article Indexes

Article indexes allow you to search for your topic in magazines, journals, newspapers and other periodicals. They may refer you to specific sources or provide full-text.

Academic Search Premier

UW Libraries Home Page→ **Databases**→ **Academic Search Premier**

Academic Search bills itself as “the world’s largest scholarly, multidisciplinary full-text database.” It includes text from over 3,600 publications.

LexisNexis Academic

UW Libraries Home Page→**Databases**→**LexisNexis Academic**

Select “General News” from the drop-down menu and “Major Papers” to get the full text of newspaper articles.

MasterFILE Premier

UW Libraries Home Page→**Databases**→**M**→ **MasterFILE Premier**

More popularly oriented than Academic Search Premier, MasterFILE Premier provides full text for 1900+ general publications. It also includes online reference sources such as the *World Almanac & Book of Facts* and the *American Heritage Dictionary*.

