This tutorial should help you get started with your research. We'll be covering how to evaluate your research topic and using effective keyword searches.
Research Topic

Write about one aspect of the play *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by William Shakespeare.

**Slide Text:**
Research Topic
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**Narration:**
Let’s say that your professor has asked you to write a paper on one aspect of the play *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, by William Shakespeare, using scholarly articles.

This is your research topic. And, it’s where we’ll start.
"Now what," you might ask. We know we have to find some scholarly articles, but how do we know what to look for, or where to look?
Research Topic

Write about one aspect of the play *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by William Shakespeare.

**Slide Text:**
Research Topic
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**Narration:**
First, we'll need to figure out what we're looking for.
Our research topic contains three key concepts that we'll need to keep in mind.
The key concepts are: aspects, *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* and *William Shakespeare.*
Okay, let's think about what aspects we might find in a Midsummer Night's Dream. How about, different worlds, dreams, love, or magic?

These are just a few aspects found in a Midsummer Night's Dream, and I'm sure you can think of more.

If you're not sure where to start looking for background information or themes found in a play, click on the "How Do I Know?" button below at the bottom of your screen. Otherwise, click the continue button to move on.
Finding Background Information

Basic or background information on your play can be found in encyclopedias or general literature databases.

Examples:

- Literature Online (LION)
- Gale Virtual Reference Library

Narration:

If you're not quite sure where to start looking for a topic about your play, try some of the general literature databases that the library has to offer. Like, Literature Online, or (LION), or the Gale Virtual Reference Library. In both of these databases, you can search for background and basic information about your play by searching for the title.

Let's try finding our play in the Literature Online database.

Click to continue.
Searching for Information in the Literature Online (LION) Database

Narration:
We’ll start on the library’s homepage, we know we're looking for the Literature Online database, so we'll start on the find articles using databases section of the website, then under "L", we'll find the Literature Online database.

In the Quick Search field at the top of the screen, we'll enter the title of our play A Midsummer Night's Dream, let's see what we find!
There are several results for our play, let's look under reference.
Here we have a KnowledgeNotes(TM) Student Guide for our play.
The guide has general information about our play including a summary, the plot, style, themes and motifs, and other information.
Under themes and motifs, you'll see where we got the ideas for some of the different aspects of the play.

Click the button below to continue.
Now, let's say that you've decided to write about "love" in Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream. Authors may use different words to talk about the same concepts; it's important to brainstorm other possible keywords that you might need when looking for articles about your topic.

Now that we have some more keywords, let's try some of them out in the MLA International Bibliography Database.
Searching the MLA International Bibliography Database

(VIDEO)

Narration:

We'll begin on the library's homepage, and then under "Research Tools" we'll look for find articles using databases.

We can search for different databases by subject, and if we scroll down, we'll find a recommended list of databases just for theatre students!

We're going to use the MLA International Bibliography database because it contains many scholarly articles about different types of literature, including plays!

Once we're in the MLA database, we can search for our first key concept "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and our second key concept, which is "love".

Click continue below to see what we might find!
Let's look at some sample search results that we might get by using different combinations of our keywords.

**Search Results**

'Midsummer Night's Dream' and 'love'

56 Results

“Ten Little Fabulae”: Ovidian Tales of Love and Metamorphosis in a Midsummer Night's Dream

by: Barusso, Barbara; Cahiers Elisabethains: Late Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1994 Apr; 45: 21-31. (journal article)

“Jack Shall Have Jill: The Ideology of Love in a Midsummer Night's Dream”


**Narration:**

Let's look at some sample search results that we might get by using different combinations of our keywords.

Our search for our key concepts a "Midsummer Night's Dream" and "love", gave us 56 results!

Now, not all of your results will be helpful. But, here are two journal articles that we found that might help us write our paper. You can see sample results from more keyword combinations by clicking the button below. Otherwise, you can skip to the end of this tutorial.
Search Results

'Midsummer Night’s Dream' and 'marriage'
7 Results

“*A Midsummer Night’s Dream and the Meaning of Court Marriage*”
By: Olson, Paul A.; ELH, 1957 June; 24 (2): 95-119. (journal article)
Subjects: symbolism; genre conventions; masque; love; reason; marriage
Database: MLA International Bibliography

“The Marriage of Theseus and Hippolyta”
By: Nemerov, Howard; Kenyon Review, 1956; 18: 633-641. (journal article)
Subjects: A Midsummer Night's Dream
Database: MLA International Bibliography

Narration:
When we look for "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and "marriage", we only get 7 results.

But, these may be helpful too! Here are two examples of articles that we found using this search.

If you want to see more keyword combinations, click the button below. Otherwise, you can skip to the end.
Search Results

'Midsummer Night’s Dream' and 'desire'

7 Results

"Economies of Desire in A Midsummer Night’s Dream"
by: Boehrer, Bruce; Shakespeare Studies, 2004; 32: 99-117. (journal article)
Subjects: bestiarity; homosexuality; heterosexuality
Database: MLA International Bibliography

"Reading Shakespeare’s Cupid"
by: Lewis, Alan; Criticism: A Quarterly for Literature and the Arts, 2005 Spring; 47(2): 177-213. (journal article)
Subjects: cupid; sexual desire; rebellion; freud, sigmund
Database: MLA International Bibliography

Narration:

In our last example, we searched for "Midsummer Night’s Dream" and "desire".
And again, we got 7 results. Here are some examples of what we found.
Now you can use any combination of keywords to find anything in any of the databases.
If at first you don’t succeed, as the old adage goes, try, try again.
Click the button below to continue.
Summary

1) Think about your research topic.
   • What are the key concepts?

2) Brainstorm keywords for your search.
   • Think about synonyms and similar concepts.
   • You may need to use different combinations.

3) Find your sources!
   • Do you need scholarly articles, reviews, or books?
   • Try searching by “subject” to find a database.

Slide Text:
Summary

1) Think about your research topic.
   What are the key concepts?

2) Brainstorm keywords for your search.
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   Do you need scholarly articles, reviews, or books?
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Narration:
In summary, when you're approaching a research project:

Number One: Think about your research topic before you start looking for information, and identify the key concepts you'll be looking for.

Step Two: Brainstorm keywords to use in your search. Remember that scholars can use different words to talk about the same ideas, so think about synonyms and similar concepts.

Step Three: Think about what kinds of sources you'll need. Do you need scholarly articles or reviews that can be found by using the library's databases? Or, do you need to check the library's catalog to find books on your subject?
Questions?
If you have any questions, feel free to contact the library. A librarian will be happy to answer your questions and get you started with your research!

Ways to get in touch:
- Email: Beth Kerr, the Theatre/Dance Librarian
- Go to the Library’s Website and Click on “Ask a Librarian”

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Narration:
If you have any questions, or are having trouble getting started, feel free to contact the library. A librarian will be happy to answer your questions and get you started with your research.
You can go into any of the libraries on campus, or email Beth Kerr, the Theatre/Dance librarian directly.
You can also go to the library’s website and click on “Ask a Librarian” to chat, email, call, or visit with your questions.