I. Define a Topic in Public Administration
       Presume you are interested in writing a paper on
       Civil service . You may want to define the scope of your
       paper by outlining the operations of the Civil Service in Germany.
              1. Search for Ideas
                     If you do not have an idea what constitutes Civil Service ,
                     search and read articles or books on the topic.
                     For example, use Emerald online database,
                     set fields to search for all fields, set Fields to search for all fields,
                     and sort results by relevance. Type:
                     Civil Service
                     You will access articles with varying numbers according to the
                     search choices you made.
                     OR, you may do a subject search in the Library's online catalog
                     under Civil Service.
                     After scanning through some articles and books, you should
                     be able to come up with preliminary ideas about your
                     topic. You can always talk to your reference librarians in the
                     Reference Area or send e-mails or chat online via the ASK A
                     LIBRARIAN service located on the Library's web page. You can
                     also consult your instructor.
              2. Narrow or Broaden Your Topic
                     You may find too much information on your topic. In that case,
                     you may want to narrow your topic. For example, in Emerald
                     you may find 65 full-text articles under Civil Service. You may
                     qualify your search by limiting your topic to a certain area such as
                     Germany.
                     If you can find only few sources, you may want to broaden your
                     topic by related fields such as bureaucracy. For example, you may
                     find 104 articles in Emerald that can assist you in broadening your
                     topic.
              3. State Your Topic as a Question
                     Stating your topic as a question may help you to stay within the
                     scope of your selected topic. For example, what is the
                     organizational culture of civil service in Germany?
              4. Identify the Type of Information Needed
                     The type of information needed depends on the following:
                     • Type of Assignment- is this a presentation, term paper, senior
                        project, thesis or dissertation?
                     • Amount of Information- how much information is needed ?
                     • Currency of Information- does this assignment require current,
                        historical information or a combination of both?
                     • Type of Resources Needed- should the information come from
                        scholarly and professional journals only, or can they come
                        from more popular sources?

- Primary vs. Secondary Resources- should the information come from primary or secondary sources?
- Information in Various Formats- should the information come from only print resources or include other formats such as visual/ graphic sources, numeric sources (statistics), audio sources and/or electronic sources?