

**Philosophical Research: How
MCC Philosophy Club Special Event
Dr. Dave Yount
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I begin with a joke: Taking work from one person without citing it is called plagiarism, but taking it from many is called research! ☺

Different resources:

1. **Oxford English Dictionary (OED):** Best dictionary ever! It gives you great definitions and the first recognized use of the term, so you really get the etymology of the word. If you really must use a dictionary to give a definition, use this one. Free from MCC's library website.
2. **Dictionaries of Philosophy** – And there's something called *The Philosopher's Toolbox*, with a bunch of terms, famous dilemmas, arguments, etc.. Very helpful for reference, when someone brings up some term or person you're not aware of, for a quick understanding of it.
3. **Wikipedia v. Britannica** – Wikipedia wins!? Don't tell the librarians I said so, but the Britannicas are reviewed by an editing board, just as Wikipedia is, and Britannica articles are written by one person. Can one person adequately describe a given person, situation, or term, noting the controversies surrounding it, and from different perspectives. Not usually. Is Britannica up to date practically as soon as someone dies, and what the controversies are for any given term/person, etc.? OK, with that said, you should check the Wikipedia entry (because it is true that sometimes the cite gets punked), and verify the basic information elsewhere briefly. If it matches up, then it's good enough. I use Wikipedia just to look up people and basic concepts to get a sense of who or what.
4. **Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy** and **Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy** (online), and there are old school hard copies of **The Encyclopedia of Philosophy** (in 4 volumes); great resources all.
5. **Introduction to Logic Book.** You can use it as a reference for argument forms and fallacies.
6. **Anthologies, even of excerpts.** You can learn a little about a lot of philosophy that way. Get these used from Amazon.com or Bookmans on Southern and Country Club. Besides textbook anthologies, you might look into Oxford University Press' "A Very Short Introduction to ..." books. I've read about 6 of them now and they're quite excellent.
7. **Language, Language, Language:** If your research is focused on a figure or a work in another language, knowing that original language is very important. Get a head start in your undergrad years if you are able. I took Greek as a minor in grad school, and that worked out.
8. **Book Index** – It's a basic point, but it saves a lot of time if you don't have to read the whole book, when you have a specific topic you're researching, for instance.
9. **How to Read More in a Year:** Read a little bit each day (I read 5-7 pages on MWF, and 10-12 pages on TR every morning when I get to work, and right before I go to bed – I have a book I'm reading at work, and one that I'm reading at home); that way you can make your way through thousands of pages a year! Think "The Little Engine That Could" and "One day at a time." I've literally read thousands of pages since 2001 or so. I got tired of saying that I won't be reading book X until I retire. I figured that I'd benefit more as a philosopher and professor, and the students would benefit from my having read this stuff NOW or soon, versus later or never. Oh, one more rule: If you're reading something and really not getting anything out of it, stop reading it and go on to the next one (or maybe check out other chapters just to make sure you really have a dud on your hands)!
10. **Post-It notes on your books?** Why? To remind you where people say important things you don't want to forget. Even if you DO (as I don't) underline in your books, this is like a file system and much more efficient for finding what you want to remember. I have a sample.
11. **Amazon Wishlist** – For remembering books people tell you to read.
12. **Create your own Database of what you own:** My Excel sheet of all my stuff – I have entered every PHI book and journal article that I own or have a copy of, so I won't buy a book in a used bookstore or copy something in the future that I don't already have.

13. **Create your own anthologies of passages you'll always need.** I've done this with Plato, Plotinus, and Buddhism, and I can't tell you how valuable this has been for my research.
14. **MCC Library's Ebrary:** ebooks online that you can save on your "bookshelf" and highlight.
15. **MCC Library's Database: Philosophy and Religion.** You can look up journal articles and even save them in pdf format on your hard drive.
16. **MCC Library's Database: Opposing Viewpoints** – especially good for applied ethics.
17. **MCC Library's Database: ArtStor** – cool for pics of philosophers or famous works of art.
18. **JSTOR (available @ ASU, UA, and NAU):** A database program universities subscribe to, that allows you to search a journal database. Excellent resource. May be available for free if you visit their library; ask one of their librarians.
19. **Your Public Library:** Free audio books on CD; usable on iPods via iTunes if you burn them into iTunes.
20. **iTunes University** – Would you like to effectively take a class for free, from a Harvard, Yale, Berkeley professor who is world famous? Have at it! Look at the bottom of the iTunes Store for the icon, search philosophy (or evolution, or cognitive science, or ...), download to your iTunes and put on your iPod and listen in your car or while you're cleaning your house/apartment, etc. It's free!!!!
21. **Create a Bibliography Quickly!** www.easybib.com will create your bibliography in MLA, APA, or Chicago style format. You just load in the website, the ISBN of the book, etc., and it does the rest! (Thanks, Kelly for this one!)