I. Find Books

A) Reference Materials: Encyclopedias, Dictionaries, etc.

Reference materials offer background information and broad overviews of subjects. This information is often helpful in narrowing your topic and in selecting a specific area to explore further. Reference materials such as almanacs and yearbooks also provide quick access to statistical data.

1) Suggested Titles:


- **Encyclopedia of Juvenile Justice.** Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2003. (REF HV9104 .E58 2003) This resource provides more than 200 entries covering a broad range of topics such as boot camps, truancy, drug use, and historical and contemporary theories and practices of juvenile justice in the United States.
B) **Library Catalog:** Print and E-book Collections

The online catalog offers convenient access to titles housed at all VC library locations. At the catalog screen, select “Search the Catalog” to locate titles or subjects that match your terms such as “corrections.”

**E-books:** To search only for titles available electronically, from the “Search the Catalog” page, select “Online” as the desired location. Use the dropdown menu to choose your search method (author, subject terms, etc), then enter your search term (ex. **Texas Criminal Justice System**).

*Helpful feature:* While viewing a book, select the “Search” tab to bring up a search bar which will allow you to locate a word or phrase within the entire content of the book.

C) **Browse the Collection**

Physically browse the criminal justice titles shelved by call number in the following Library of Congress Classification ranges:

- HV6001 – 9960: Criminology, Criminal Justice Administration
- KF8700 – 9827: Courts, Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure

**II. Find Articles**

A) Article Databases: Databases provide 24/7 access to articles from any internet connection. They are available both on and off campus.

1. **Academic Search Complete:** This database searches numerous journals to offer full text articles on nearly all subjects including criminal justice. Coverage includes the following journals:

   - *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*
   - *American Journal of Criminal Law*
   - *Crime & Delinquency*
   - *Criminal Justice Ethics*
   - *Law & Policy*
   - *Justice Quarterly*

   and over one hundred others. Select from a number of different limiters to customize your search, including cover stories, publication dates, page numbers, etc.

   Enter your keyword(s) to search all journals simultaneously for articles addressing your topic. For example, if looking for information on the consequences of **job stress** on **police** officers, enter these terms connected with the Boolean operator **AND** to find articles containing both subjects.
Citing the articles: The database offers formatting rules with examples for citing the articles selected. For assistance in citing the articles, select the “Help” link in the upper right corner of the screen, scroll to view “Citation Styles” in the left menu bar, and then choose the documentation style of your choice.

2. Military & Government: Contains 300 full-text journals, including titles relating to criminal justice such as *Harvard International Review*, and *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*.

3. Opposing Viewpoints Resource Center: Offers viewpoint essays and articles on a variety of criminal justice issues, such as gun control and capital punishment.

4. CQ Researcher: Offers in-depth discussions of social issues and topics related to criminal justice, such as prison reform.

5. LearningExpress Library: Practice tests for various criminal justice careers as a police, corrections, or border patrol officer.

In-house Magazines and Journals: The following periodicals are available in the Century City Library: *Law Enforcement Technology*.

III. Suggested Websites

United States Department of Justice: Contains current justice news stories, the Department of Justice Blog, resources such as forms and publications, and featured resources including Firearm Statistics, a link to the FBI Financial Crimes report, and a link to the National Sex Offender Registry.

National Criminal Justice Reference Service: Contains A-Z criminal justice topics; searchable questions and answers; funding information; and information about upcoming justice events.

American Bar Association: Criminal Justice: Features current Criminal Law news, job openings, past and forthcoming events, and highlights Criminal Justice periodicals and publications.

Texas Department of Criminal Justice: Website provides quick links, job information, news, announcements, and images for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.

National Center for State Courts: Visitors to the site can browse by category, by state, or by specific topics A-Z.
The Research Process

1) Select a topic that you find interesting and appropriate for the assignment.

2) Review reference sources such as subject encyclopedias for background information to help focus or narrow the search.

   For example, students interested in juvenile justice may consult the Encyclopedia of Juvenile Justice for ideas in narrowing the focus to a particular area of interest such as gangs, teen drug addiction, or school violence.

3) Restate the topic as a question. Inquiry is at the heart of the research process, a quest to locate information which answers questions and leads researchers to a greater understanding of the topic.

   Restating the topic as a question will help in:
   - Locating information that is useful and relevant to the primary focus or thesis of your research.
   - Identifying the keywords or phrases to use in the search statement.

   Example: Has early intervention been effective in preventing juvenile crime?

4) Develop a search statement by combining keywords or concepts from the research question. For example, “early intervention” and “juvenile crime” were identified as keywords in the question above. By connecting both terms with the Boolean operator “and”, the researcher will retrieve only those articles that discuss both concepts, thus improving the relevancy of the search.

   Enter in search field: intervention and juvenile crime

5) Develop alternate search statements to improve the search results. Authors may use various terms to describe the same concept.

   For example, juvenile crime is often used in the same context as youth violence.

   By identifying and connecting alternate terms, researchers may expand the search results. As indicated below, consider brainstorming and listing synonyms or word variations to identify alternate keywords.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept 1</th>
<th>AND</th>
<th>Concept 2</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>early intervention</td>
<td>AND</td>
<td>juvenile crime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diversion programs</td>
<td>AND</td>
<td>youth violence</td>
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<tr>
<td>services to high-risk youth</td>
<td>AND</td>
<td>juvenile delinquency</td>
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<tr>
<td>mental-health awareness</td>
<td>AND</td>
<td>juvenile courts</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
6) Evaluate information for objectivity and reliability.

7) Cite the information borrowed from other authors or informational sources. Careful documentation will ensure that credit is given with no intention to plagiarize or claim ownership of information belonging to other researchers. For explanations and examples, visit the Duke University Library’s Citation page.

Questions?

Email: librarian@vernoncollege.edu

Chat: “Ask the Librarian” link on the Library homepage.

Phone: 940-552-6291 ext: 2222