THE RESEARCH PROCESS

The Assignment
• Start by reading the assignment carefully.
• Do you understand the question?
• Is your topic specified, or do you need to select and focus your own topic?

What Do You Know?
• How much do you already know about the topic?
• Can you list related sub-topics or concepts?
• Do you need to do a little background reading from print or online reference sources to get some context and begin to make notes of concepts and keywords?

Plan
• What information are you missing?
• How might that information be presented (book, article, study, statistics)?
• Where would be the best place to find this information (library, databases, Internet)?

Research
• Locate needed resources in the library, online database, or Internet.
• Some resources can requested from other libraries.
• Be sure to also capture the information you’ll need for bibliography or works cited page.

Examine & Evaluate
• Do you have enough information to complete your assignment?
• Is the information you found current and reliable?
• Is it balanced or does it represent a single point of view?

Publish
• At some point, you’ll decide you are ready to start writing your outline, paper, or presentation.
• You may discover you need to jump back into the research process to fill an information gap.