BRAINSTORMING BEFORE SEARCHING

Knowing how to think about a topic, analyze it, break it into manageable pieces, and combine the pieces in a meaningful way is helpful in most careers.

FLIP THE PAGE ONCE YOU'RE READY!

Here's all the stuff you need before you start, once you are ready, flip the page over to see the steps!

TIPS & TRICKS

- Don't skip this step. It makes searching easier and more efficient.

- Library staff teaches library users how to do this on a daily basis.

TIME

15 - 20 mins. Varies depending on the complexity of the topic.

MATERIALS

- Electronic device
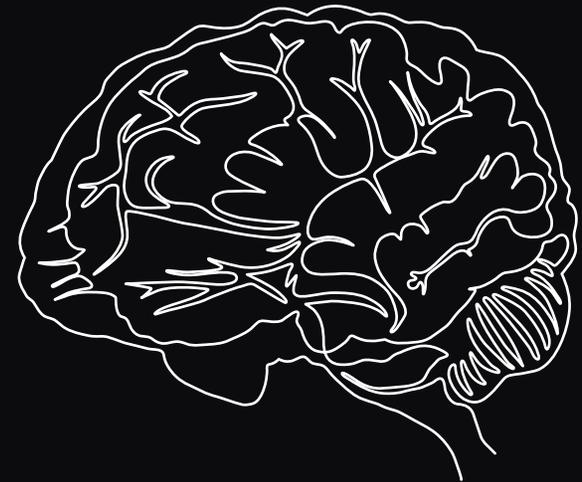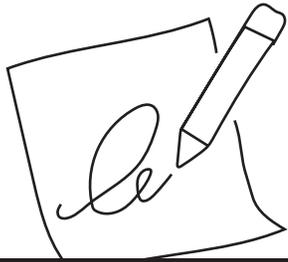Or
- Paper and pen
(Required for note taking)

PARTICIPANTS

1 HUMAN (UNLESS IT'S A GROUP PROJECT)

DIFFICULTY
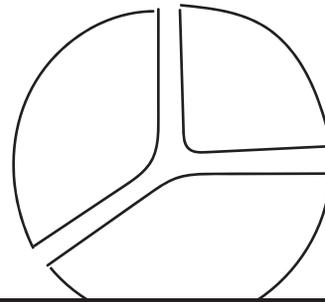
3/5 SOMEWHAT DIFFICULT

Lethbridge College
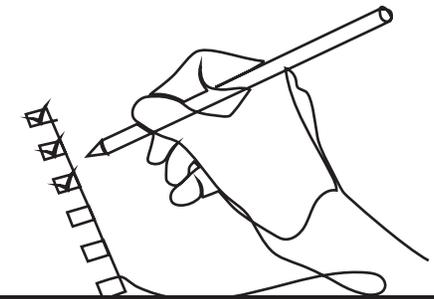
1 WRITE DOWN IDEAS

Write down what you plan to research—whether a thesis statement or something more informal. You want to have an idea what your main topic(s) is/are. Use your textbook, class notes, encyclopedias, or other sources to find names of important people, relevant dates, and basic facts.

2 MAJOR PARTS OF YOUR TOPIC

Think about the major parts of your topic, including who it affects or which group(s) you plan to focus on, why your topic matters to the group you have chosen to study, whether it happened in the past or present (or may happen in the future), and the main points you plan to cover.
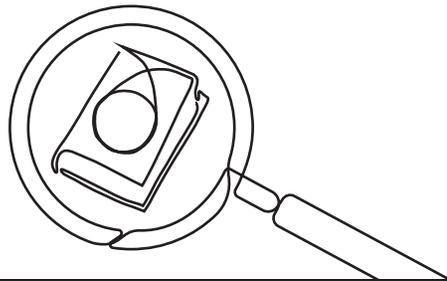
3 MAKE A LIST

Make a list of possible search terms for each point in step 2.
- E.g., gender, male, female, transgender, LGBTQIA+, etc.
- E.g., salary expectations, wage gap, salary gap, gender pay gap, pay inequity, pay equity, etc.
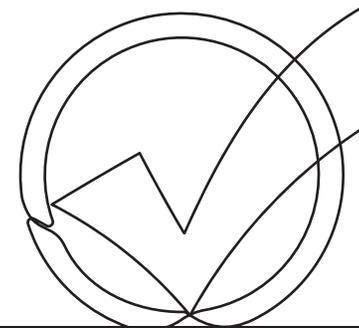
4 SEARCH KEY WORDS

Once you have brainstormed lists of terms, choose those you want to begin searching with,
- e.g., female, Canadian universities, wage gap.

5 REFER TO LIST

Keep the list you have made as you may have to review the terms or mix and match terms differently once you begin searching databases for results.