How do you gather information when you are assigned a speech or research paper on a controversial topic? This handout will help you locate broad topics of interest and then help you narrow down your main topic, examine different viewpoints, find statistical information to back up your argument, and help you find journal, magazine, newspaper, and Internet sites of good authority. By using this guide, you will be able to give or write a thoroughly researched speech or paper conveying your point of view intelligently on the controversial topic you have selected.

**PRO/CON REFERENCE BOOKS** – This is a great place to start your research. The following list of books will help you narrow down your controversial topic, examine different viewpoints, and find statistical information.

**Opposing Viewpoints** – REF H31 – *Opposing Viewpoints* presents stimulating debates that can be used to enhance and evaluate ideas. The varied opinions contained in each book examine many different aspects of a single issue. *Opposing Viewpoints* books challenge readers to question their own opinions and assumptions by reading carefully balanced opposing views.

**Current Controversies** – REF H30 – The purpose of the *Current Controversies Series* is to explore many of the social, political, and economic controversies dominating today’s national and international scene. The debates in *Current Controversies* are presented in a useful, timeless fashion and the articles and book excerpts included in each title are selected if they contribute valuable, long-range ideas to the overall debate.

**Information Plus** – REF H30 – Although statistics are a major focus of the *Information Plus Reference Series*, each book contains historical background, descriptions of major events related to the subject, relevant laws and court cases, and examples of how these issues play out in American life. Other features may include primary documents or pro and con debate sections. All material is presented in an unbiased manner.

**Facts on File Library in a Book** – REF H31 – *Library in a Book Series* is designed to be a first-step research source on important current issues. Each set includes an overview of the topic, chronology of important events, glossary of terms, biographical listing, complete index, and a fully annotated bibliography.

**Contemporary World Issues** – REF H31 – This series addresses vital social, political, environmental, and economic issues in today’s society. Each book is authoritative, clearly written, up-to-date, and objective. Each volume contains an overview of the subject, a detailed chronology, biographical sketches, facts and data, and /or documents, and other primary-source material, a directory of organizations and agencies, annotated lists of print and non-print resources, and an index.

PERIODICAL DATABASES – the Periodical Databases will help you locate magazine, journal and newspaper articles. For off-campus access to these electronic resources, click on the link to “Periodicals and Electronic Resources” and then your username is your student ID number using a dash (1234-5678) and the password is your last name.

Opposing Viewpoints – This database contains information on social issues. You may access essays from books, statistics, primary documents, links to websites, and full-text journal, magazine, and newspaper articles.

Global Issues in Context – This database covers a range of issues that are important throughout the world. It also contains information about various countries and regions. You may access original content, book sections, and articles from journals, magazines, and newspapers.

The CQ Researcher – The weekly publications provide in-depth, non-bias analysis of the most current major and controversial issues of the day with complete summaries, all the pros and cons, bibliographies and more.

EBSCO Power Search and InfoTrac Power Search – Both of these comprehensive search tools provide full-text access to periodical titles from the arts and the humanities to the social sciences, science and technology. You may access scholarly journals, news magazines, and newspapers.

Student Resources in Context – This database contains information on all core subjects from Science to Literature to History.

Lexis-Nexis Academic – This is a premier online source of local, national, and international news, business, legal, medical, and government information, mostly full-text and mostly from 1985 to the present.

INTERNET WEB SITES – The following web sites will help you find reliable Internet resources that are of good authority for speech and research paper use.

ProCon.org – http://www.ProCon.org - This site is run by a nonprofit charity that aims to provide nonbiased information on controversial issues for the purpose of education. It provides non-partisan articles, facts, figures, and citations for pro and con arguments for close to 50 topics.

Facster – http://www.facster.com - This site was created to help you easily find and check all statistical facts. This site contains Statistical Abstract of the United States, California Statistical Abstracts, and Census of the United States, as well as Comparative International Statistics.

Internet Public Library – http://www.ipl.org - This site was developed by librarians as a reliable and efficient guide to Internet resources. The Index is a searchable, annotated subject directory of “information that you can trust.” The site is hosted by Drexel University’s College of Information Science & Technology and a consortium of colleges and universities with programs in information science.