

SOURCES OF DEBATE EVIDENCE

Mastery of debate research requires source variety. Debate judges, much like the English teachers who grade your essays, are impressed by researchers who dig below the surface of a topic. Digging below the surface means looking into books, government documents, law reviews, and reports from major think tanks. Newspaper and magazine accounts are often very useful—and they are certainly the easiest to read—but the cutting-edge researcher treats these sources as merely a beginning place. The following paragraphs describe how to gain access to a wider world of ideas and arguments.

BOOKS

Books are too often neglected as a resource for modern debate research. This is unfortunate because some of the best debate evidence on debate topics appears in books.

Gaining access to books sometimes involves either travel or expense. Finding a particular book often means visiting the closest college library or purchasing the book through Amazon.com (or one of its online competitors). Before deciding to buy a book, however, check into whether your high school or public library is a member of the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC). If so, it might be able to obtain the book through interlibrary loan.

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