

# CHAPTER ONE

## *THE PROCESS*

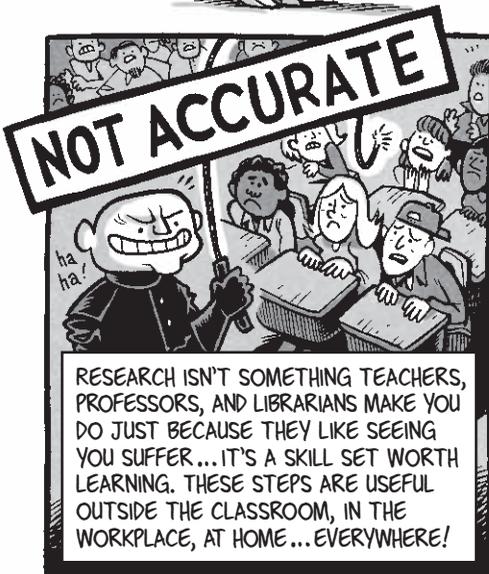
Steps to Finding and Using the Right Information. Anytime. Anywhere.

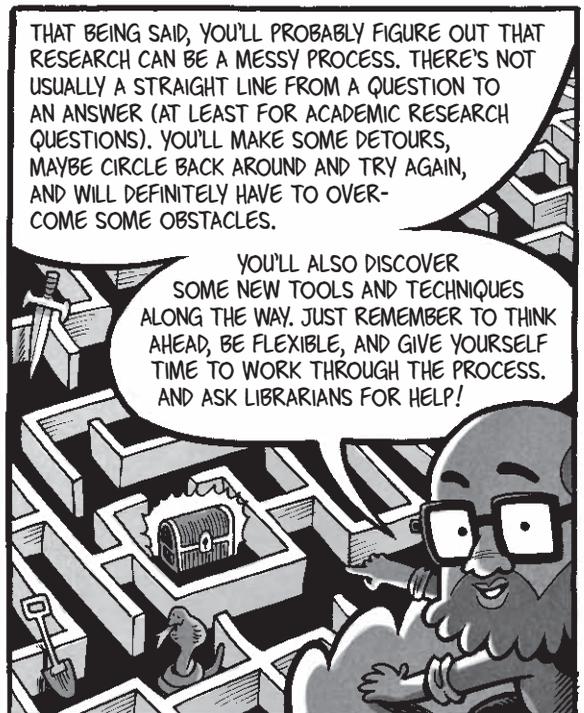
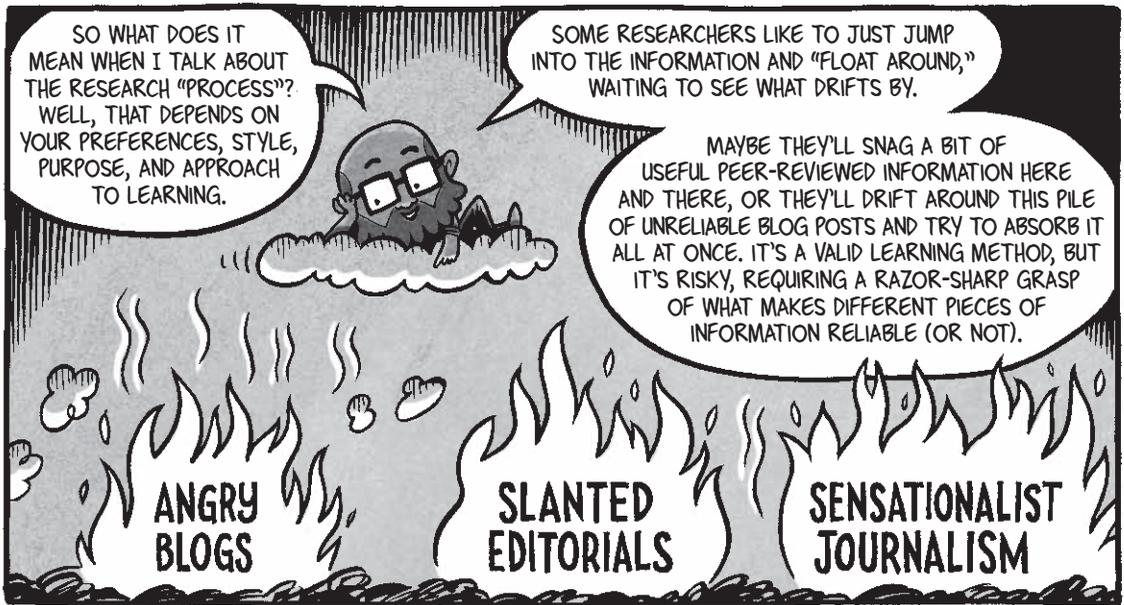
NERVOUS YET?  
DON'T WORRY.  
WE'RE HERE  
TO HELP.



IN THIS CHAPTER,  
WE'LL DISCUSS HOW TO DIVE  
INTO THAT GIANT MESS OF INFORMATION  
AND UNEARTH WHAT YOU NEED TO CREATE  
SOMETHING COHERENT, STRUCTURED, AND USABLE.  
**RESEARCH** (IN THE LIBRARY OR ON THE WEB)  
IS THE PROCESS OF SEARCHING FOR, SELECTING,  
EVALUATING, AND USING INFORMATION TO MEET  
A NEED, ANSWER A QUESTION, OR  
RESOLVE A PROBLEM.

WE STUDY THE RESEARCH PROCESS  
MOSTLY FROM A CLASSROOM PERSPECTIVE,  
BUT YOU CAN APPLY THESE PRINCIPLES ANY TIME  
YOU NEED TO FIND AND USE INFORMATION. AND  
WHEN I SAY ANY TIME, I MEAN ANY TIME.





REGARDLESS OF WHAT APPROACH YOU TAKE, YOU'LL BEGIN WITH AN IDEA, A TOPIC.

PICK SOMETHING YOU'RE INTERESTED IN, SOMETHING YOU HAVE A **QUESTION** ABOUT. IF THE TOPIC IS ASSIGNED OR CHOSEN FOR YOU, APPROACH IT IN A WAY THAT'LL ALLOW YOU TO BE CREATIVE AND FIND THE INTERESTING ASPECTS OF THE TOPIC.

YOU'LL FIND THAT YOUR WORK WILL BE MUCH BETTER IF YOU'RE INTERESTED.



IF THE RESEARCH IS FOR A CLASS, BE SURE YOU KNOW WHAT'S EXPECTED FROM YOU. READ THE DETAILS OF THE ASSIGNMENT, AND ASK YOUR INSTRUCTOR FOR CLARIFICATION IF YOU'RE NOT SURE OF THE ASSIGNMENT'S PURPOSE. THAT PURPOSE WILL GUIDE YOUR RESEARCH.

IF, FOR EXAMPLE, YOU NEED TO WRITE AN ARGUMENT PAPER, YOU'LL HAVE TO FIND INFORMATION ON **BOTH** SIDES OF AN ISSUE.

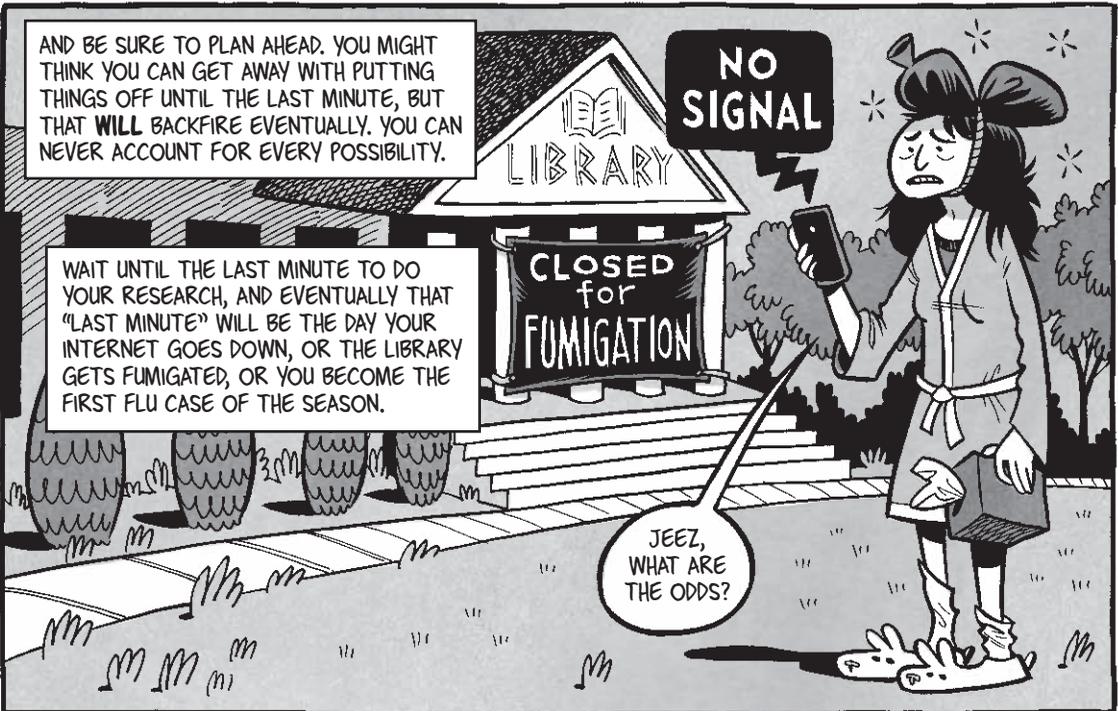


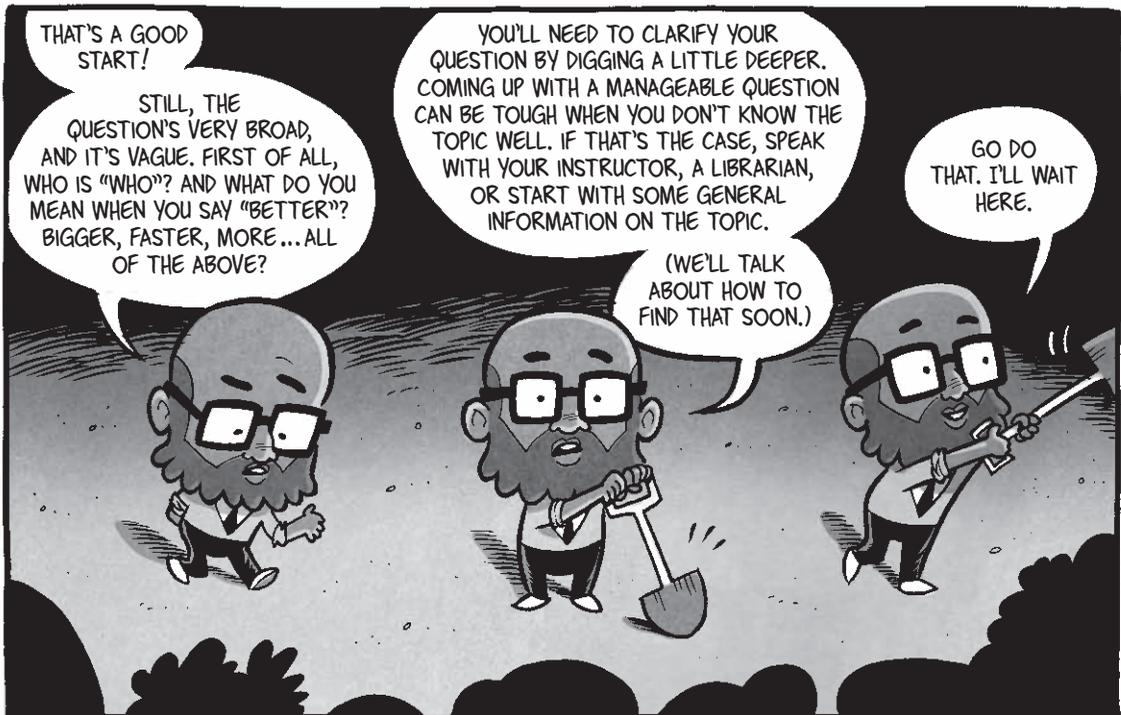
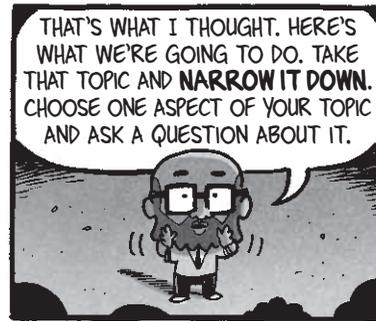
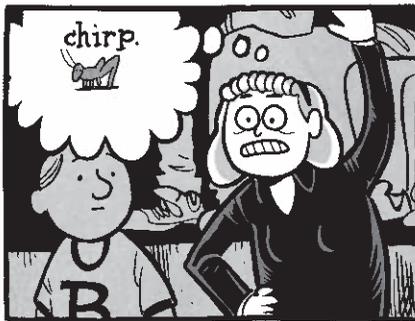
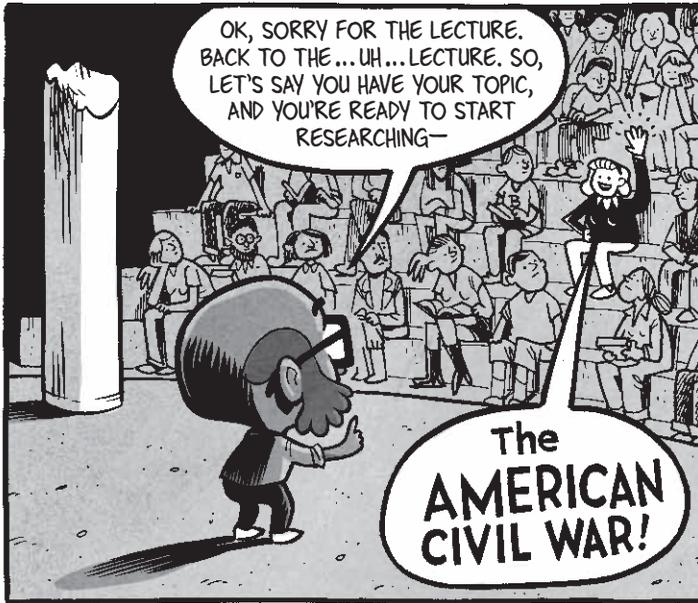
AND BE SURE TO PLAN AHEAD. YOU MIGHT THINK YOU CAN GET AWAY WITH PUTTING THINGS OFF UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE, BUT THAT **WILL** BACKFIRE EVENTUALLY. YOU CAN NEVER ACCOUNT FOR EVERY POSSIBILITY.

WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE TO DO YOUR RESEARCH, AND EVENTUALLY THAT "LAST MINUTE" WILL BE THE DAY YOUR INTERNET GOES DOWN, OR THE LIBRARY GETS FUMIGATED, OR YOU BECOME THE FIRST FLU CASE OF THE SEASON.

**NO SIGNAL**

JEEZ, WHAT ARE THE ODDS?





# CRITICAL THINKING EXERCISES

REMEMBER TO USE YOUR ONLINE TOOL TO RECORD  
YOUR RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONS.

1. How do you prefer to do research? Do you like to just “jump in” and see what information you come across? Or do you prefer to have more structure and develop your research methodically, from the ground up? Describe your normal process for developing a topic and finding information. What could you do to improve your own approach to the research process?
2. When searching online, how do you decide what information to look at and what information to ignore? How do you decide what is good or bad? Do you trust the search engine to provide you with the best information, or do you take steps to ensure that your search is designed to be effective?
3. Tell us about some research you’ve recently done. It doesn’t have to be for academic purposes. Remember, research is about a question you’ve had and the process of answering it. You might have tried to find a good, new sci-fi book to read, or you might not have understood a pop culture reference from your favorite show. It could be anything. How did you attempt to find information to answer the question? Did you find more than one resource to help you? Did those resources disagree or conflict? If so, how did that affect your next steps and eventual answer?
4. The next time you research a topic, try keeping track of the resources you locate, regardless of where you find them or what format they take. As you read through each resource, note how your views on the topic change and explain how what you’ve learned will determine your next steps. Show your results to your instructor, a librarian, or even a friend, and get some feedback from them.