Tips on conducting research

1. **Get a working knowledge of your topic – the BASICS** - so that you can talk about it - you have a general understanding of it
   a. Start with browsing **authoritative reference** sources of your own or which are available in the library at Brookes, such as:
      1. Encyclopedias
      2. Handbooks
      3. Dictionaries
      4. Atlases
   b. Looks for answers to questions like: **who, what, when, where, why, how**
   c. If you find your topic is too big or too involved for the scope of your current project, **narrow your topic** to an interesting or puzzling or controversial aspect of your topic.

2. As you focus in on your topic / thesis, **search the online library catalog** for books on your topic:
   a. Use the **OPAC** – the online library catalog -- to find books on your topic
   b. Search by **KEYWORD**
      i. Less is more – Search just one word at a time, if possible
      ii. Try different words - you’ll get different results
   c. Search by **AUTHOR or TITLE** only if you know the name of an author who has written on your subject or the exact title of a book on your topic.
   d. **Click on the title** of a promising book to see the **full record**. This may contain a list of the table of contents and a listing of one or more subjects that will give you a good idea of what is covered in the book.
   e. Write down the “call number” which will look something like:
      i. BS2765.3 .G54 2008.
   f. Anything in the catalog should be found with a yellow label on the spine of the book with the call number on it. Books are organized first alphabetically, then numerically.
   g. Some books are not yet in the catalog (and have white spine labels). These may not be checked out until they are entered into the catalog. Ask the librarian for details.