TIPS FOR USING GOOGLE
There are numerous general Web search engines, such as Bing, Yahoo, and Ask. Probably the most well known engine is Google, in part because it is more sophisticated than many of the others. Not all search engines work like Google, and different search engines will find different information. This is partly because they rank sites in different ways.

Google allows you to limit your search in many ways, for example, by domain (.edu, .gov, .org). One way is to use the Advanced Search screen. In order to access the advanced search, you need to type in some search terms in Google’s search box. You will then see a small gear icon. By clicking on this icon, you can access the Advanced Search screen as well as additional search tips under Search Help.

To do a more effective search using Google’s basic search box, use these tips:

- Whenever you have a phrase (two or more words that should appear next to each other), like “gun control”, “stem cell research”, or “global warming”, ALWAYS use quotation marks. This will reduce the number of results you retrieve significantly and will also increase the relevancy of your results.
- Unlike article databases, the order of search terms affects the order of search results in Google. Be sure to put the most important terms first.
- For more relevant results, use more terms. For example, if you are interested in how sleep deprivation affects college students’ grades, don’t just type “sleep deprivation” in the box. Type in “sleep deprivation” college grades “academic achievement”.

The screen shots that follow show how using the three tips reduces the number of search results found while increasing the relevancy. In these examples, we are trying to find information on the Web that will address the following research question: “How does sleep deprivation in college affect students’ academic achievement?”
This search on sleep deprivation retrieved over seven million hits. Unfortunately, none of these had anything to do with sleep deprivation in college.
This search retrieved fewer results, but still almost two million hits. Putting “sleep deprivation in quotation marks” and adding the word college helped lower the number of results and made the results more relevant. All of these have something to do with sleep deprivation in college, but none are focused on grades or academic achievement.
This search retrieved only 12,600 results. Using quotation marks around all of the phrases and adding a few more relevant terms greatly decreased the number of results and a few of these sites focus on grades, sleep deprivation, and college students.
In this section, we'll review some of the things to look for that will indicate whether you've found a website, a Web page, an online article, or a report. Next, we'll review the process of doing an initial evaluation of your results. After you do a Google search, how do you know what you are actually finding? Is it a book? An article? A website or Web page? Can you tell anything about what you found from looking at the results? You can save time by doing some initial evaluation of your search results BEFORE you click on them.

One way to tell that you have an article is to look for article characteristics, like a volume and issue number and journal title. This particular record even says [journal article].

This record provides an abstract (summary) but does not give you a link to the full text, so this is probably not something you could use unless you could find this through a library database.
Here is another article. All of the journal information is provided (see yellow highlighted portion):

- Journal name: Sleep
- Year published: 2000
- Volume number: 23
- Issue number: 8
- Page numbers: 1067-1073
- Authors: Harrison, Horne, Rothwell
- Title of article: Prefrontal neuropsychological effects of sleep deprivation....

All of this information should appear in the citation.

This record provides both an abstract (summary) AND a link to the full text (see value highlighted portion).
Here is another article, only this one is a newspaper article from the New York Times.

Remember when you cite newspaper articles you need the name of the newspaper (New York Times), the article title (Poor sleep may spur college weight gain), the author, and the date.
INITIAL ANALYSIS OF SEARCH RESULTS

Here is a Google search results screen for a search on test anxiety in college students, and an initial examination of this page.

Organizations that deal with your topic can be a good starting place. The domain name of this site is .org, which lets you know that it belongs to some sort of organization.

This is a pdf from an educational site (.edu) but this one could be written by students or for students. This one is by the Academic Resource Center (arc)

This one could be a commercial site (.com) trying to sell something. For information on the source, look at studyskillclasses.com

This one appears to be from a department at a university.

This one appears to be from a department at a community college

A pdf by someone named Morris. This could be a high school source (chs could mean a high school), but it's hard to tell just from looking. After clicking on this link, we find that it is actually a Master’s project.

Wikipedia can be a good starting place for background information but is not generally acceptable for college level papers.