

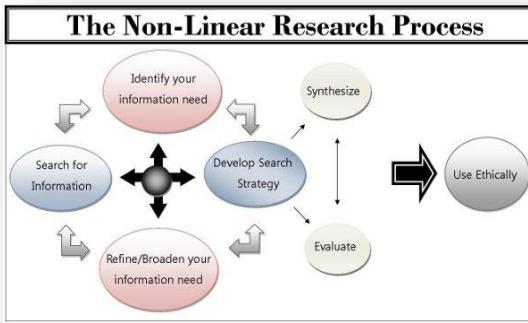
The Research Process

The research process is a set of **steps** that helps you fill an information need. This could be anything from a **personal interest in a topic to writing a research paper**. Once you are familiar with the steps in the research process, you can create an excellent end product while saving time and energy. You can think of the research process in one of two ways: **linear** and **non-linear**.

The Linear Research Process

1. Define your information need
2. Develop search strategies
3. Locate and access
4. Evaluate
5. Synthesize
6. Use/Present

Looking at the research process linearly is helpful because it outlines a **clear set of necessary steps** you must take to complete the entire process. It is misleading though because the actual research process is **not linear**. The non-linear research process may be more confusing to understand but it clearly shows that you have to **repeat each step many times and not necessarily in the order in which they appear**.



Keys to your Success

- Research is *always* a multi-step process
- Research is often interdisciplinary. This means you must think about other disciplines when searching for information.
- Not everything is available electronically. By limiting yourself to the information that is available electronically, you are limiting the thoroughness of your research.
- Keep a record of everything you find and where and how you found it.
- Begin by thinking broadly about your topic, then narrow and refine the focus.