Module 1: Choosing a Topic & Finding Background Information

When you’re brainstorming a topic for a research project, it helps to find background information. Gale Virtual Reference Library, available through the Libraries’ website, can help you get a solid introduction to a topic. To access Gale Virtual Reference Library, start at the Libraries’ homepage and click on “Databases.” Then look for the G in the alphabetical listing. Gale includes encyclopedias, dictionaries, and other basic reference sources. Try a search for almost anything. In this case, we can try “recycling.” I’m choosing the second article in the results list from a source called Pollution A to Z. This article gives us background information on recycling. Reference sources like Gale can also help us come up with additional keywords to use later in our research, like recovery and reuse, trash, garbage landfills, conservation, and more. This article also gives us information on the benefits of recycling, and discusses different types like external and internal recycling. You can also find information on what things are currently recyclable. Questions about using Gale to start your research? You can always Ask Us.