

# **COURSE 3. DOCUMENTARY RESEARCH**



# COURSE OUTLINE

Definitions

Document types and search resources

Conducting documentary research

# DEFINITIONS

## 1. DOCUMENTARY RESEARCH (DR)

- ✓ Documentary research is an **intellectual process** whose aim is to **find and analyze** documents on a given subject.
- ✓ This is the set of steps involved in **searching for, identifying** and finding **documents** (books and articles) relating to a subject, by developing a research **strategy**.
- ✓ It consists of **collecting** the information needed to understand the study.

# DEFINITIONS

## 2. DOCUMENT

According to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), a **document** is defined as “a combination of a **medium and information**, usually **permanently** recorded, and such that it can be read by man and machine”.

The document has two main functions



**Information retention**

**Communicating information.**

**The archive:** It is a specialized branch of documentation responsible for storing and preserving documents.

# DEFINITIONS

## 3. INFORMATION

It's the dissemination of news and the transmission of knowledge. A distinction is necessarily made between a sender (the one who publishes or produces information) and a receiver (the one who consults or reads the information).

**It can appear in many formats: paper, microform, audiovisual, digital.**

The medium (paper, CD, DVD, video, websites, etc.) acts as an intermediary.

Today, extremely rapid progress in the processing of information and communication plays a major role in human activity (in various fields: scientific, economic, educational, social, artistic, etc.).

# DOCUMENT TYPE

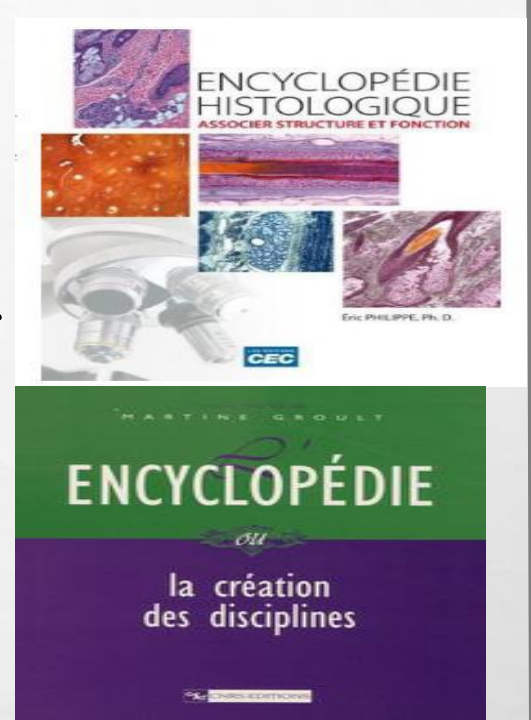
## 1. USUALS (REFERENCE BOOKS)

Reference works are the starting point for research, providing tools for **understanding and defining** your subject.

- Dictionaries
- Encyclopedias

It is a work which aims **to expose and cover all domains of knowledge**, or a specific part of them. **It offers an synthetic idea on any subject.** Presented in one or more volumes,

- Encyclopedias are books **that set out, alphabetically or methodically**, the body of universal knowledge (e.g. Encarta, encyclopedia of virology, etc.)..



# DOCUMENT TYPE

## 1. USUALS (REFERENCE BOOKS)

Reference works are the starting point for research, providing tools for **understanding and defining** your subject.

- Dictionaries
  - Encyclopedias
    - Manuals
      - Directory

A directory is an **annually-updated list** of information (name, address, contact details, etc.) on members of an association, a company, an educational establishment, a professional organization, a specific sector or subscribers to a service.

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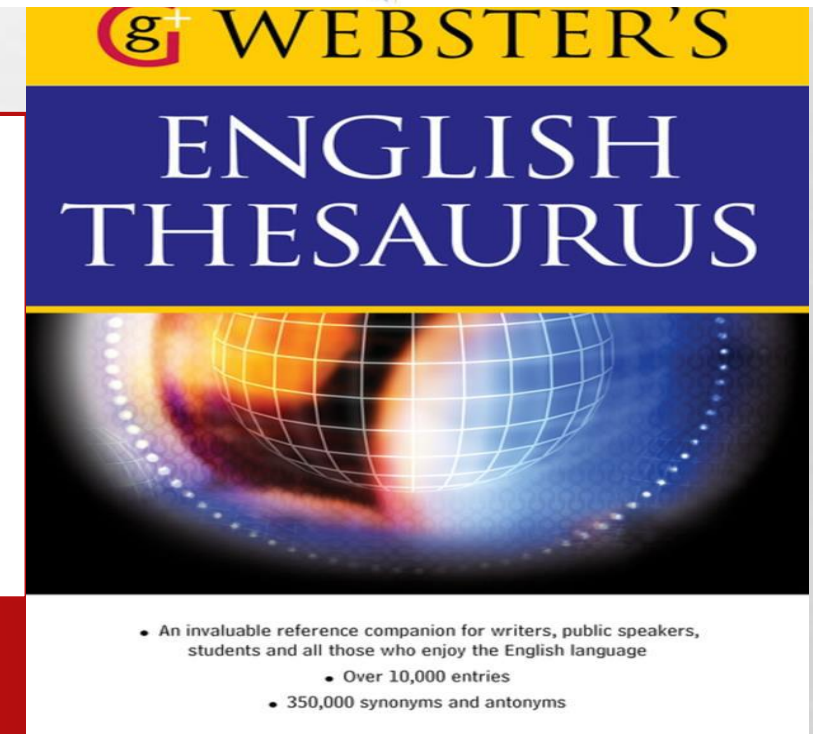
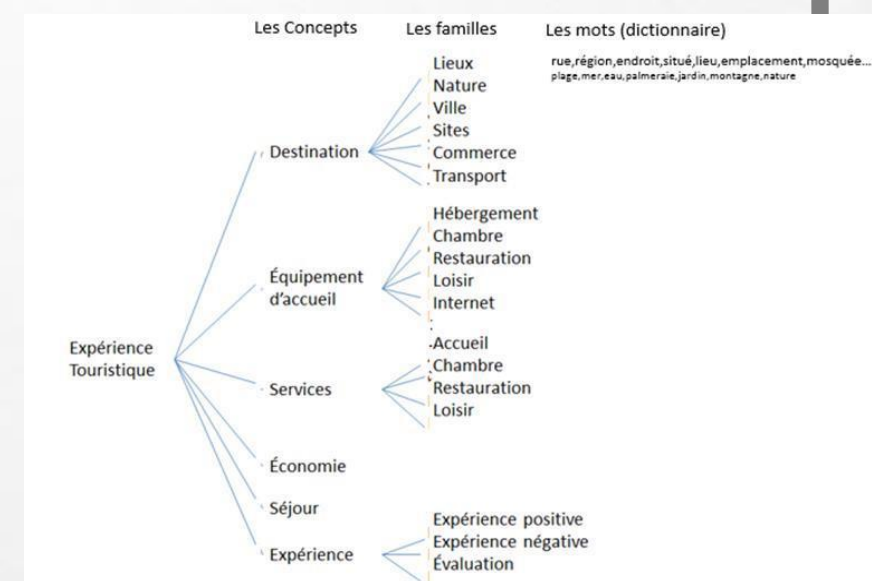
- Dictionaries
  - Encyclopedias
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# DOCUMENT TYPE

## 1. USUALS (REFERENCE BOOKS)

### ➤ Thesaurus

It's a structured repertory of terms (keywords) used to analyze the content and classification of documents, or a list of standardized terms (descriptors and non-descriptors) used to index documents and organized hierarchically (generic term broken down into several specific terms) with cross-references for equivalence and association.



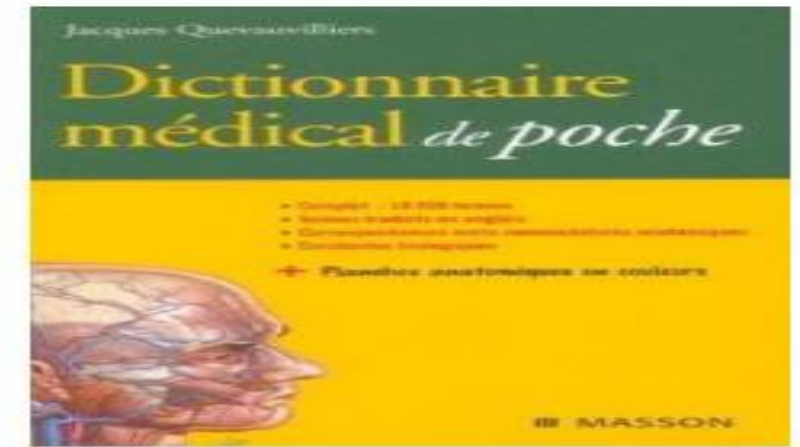
# DOCUMENT TYPE

## 1. USUALS (REFERENCE BOOKS)

- Bibliography
- Descriptor index

These are **alphabetical lists of controlled terms**. The **documentary indexer** searches this list for the descriptions which best reflect the concepts of the article.

➤ These are **specialized dictionaries containing terms (descriptors or not) used in a science or technique** (e.g. botany lexicon).



# DOCUMENT TYPE

## 2. BOOKS (MONOGRAPHS) AND OTHER

It depends on the level and nature of the information required:

- Books or monographs (manuals, mementos, conference proceedings).
- Periodicals
- Theses, dissertations, research reports
- **Specific documents:** their use will depend on the disciplinary field or the approach chosen to deal with a subject, patents, images, statistical data, etc.).
- **Official documentation:** documents published by the State (laws, decrees, regulations, etc.).

# 3. CONDUCTING DOCUMENTARY RESEARCH

The methodology of documentary research is divided into three stages:

- ✓ Preparation
- ✓ Research
- ✓ Verification

# 3. CONDUCTING DOCUMENTARY RESEARCH

## 3.1. DR PREPARATION

To define and understand the various angles of your research topic, you need to start by analyzing it.

**Subject analysis:** This involves defining the scope of your documentary research, using, for example: WHAT? WHO? WHEN? WHY ? WHERE ? HOW?

# 3. CONDUCTING DOCUMENTARY RESEARCH

## 3.2. RD IN ITSELF

Once you have identified the subject, there are five main stages in the documentary research itself:

- Search for documents
- Select documents
- Extracting information
- Processing information
- Producing the final work

# 3. CONDUCTING DOCUMENTARY RESEARCH

## 3.2. RD IN ITSELF

This stage is based **on targeting documents** by forming **keywords**. It is therefore important to:

- ✓ Avoid empty words (definition articles such as: the, of, the...)
- ✓ Integrate your keywords into a search tool to reduce **silences and noise**.
  - **Noise**: this is the excess of answers that don't correspond (or don't correspond well) to the subject. The relevant information is drowned out by the mass.
  - **Silence**: this is the absence (or very little) of information on the subject when searching for documents, even though there are relevant documents on the subject.

# **3. CONDUCTING DOCUMENTARY RESEARCH**

## **3.2. RD IN ITSELF**

Several techniques can be used to reduce silence and noise when searching for documents.

- ✓ **Boolean operators : AND, OR, NOT**
- ✓ **Truncation \* and Masks: ? or \$.**
- ✓ **Proximity operators: ADJ, NEAR, NEARx (xAV), FOLLOWED BY, SAME, etc. (depending on search tools)**
- ✓ **Search by exact expression : « »**

# 3. CONDUCTING DOCUMENTARY RESEARCH

## 3.3. VERIFICATION OF COLLECTED INFORMATION

This stage is used to check the **reliability and relevance** of the information collected.

- ✓ The reliability of the information can be verified through **the author** of the document consulted (the author is a scientist (expert), his or her opinion objective or subjective...).
- ✓ The reliability of the information provided is also verified through the **source** of the information (official and truthful).
- ✓ **The timeliness** of the information: check the date of the information found.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

**[HTTP://WWW1.UNIV-AG.FR/BUAG/COURS/LS5-WEB/CO/COURS1.HTML](http://www1.univ-ag.fr/buag/cours/ls5-web/co/cours1.html) CONSULTÉ LE 07/11/2022.**

**[HTTPS://WWW.SCRIBBR.FR/METHODOLOGIE/LA-RECHERCHE-DOCUMENTAIRE/](https://www.scribbr.fr/methodologie/la-recherche-documentaire/) CONSULTÉ LE 07/11/2022.**