

Paramedic 100—Foundations of Paramedic Practice I
Resources Pathfinder

For this assignment you are being asked to investigate several things. Chiefly you are required to: (a) define *culture* and *profession*, (b) identify if the paramedic profession has a unique culture, (c) impact of the paramedic profession in healthcare, and (d) why this profession is a good career choice. This guide will help you understand the distinctions between the various resources and how to find them.

SEARCH TERMS

Before you begin your research, it is advised that you take a little time to plan your search process. Developing a plan might sound arduous, but it will rarely take longer than half an hour. To begin your planning, you will need to define the keywords that you will use.

Paramedic and *culture* are the keywords that you might use—these are derived from your topic sentence. These words are not enough to perform your search, so develop a list of synonyms to expand your search pattern.

Keywords (and phrases) that you might consider using instead of *paramedic* include:

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|----------------------------------|--|
| ~ “emergency medical technician” | ~ “first responder” |
| ~ emt | ~ “ambulance attendant” |
| ~ “emergency medical service” | ~ use plurals (e.g., paramedics, etc.) |
| ~ ems | |

Consider other professions that might have similar cultures. Nurses and other healthcare providers might be similar so consider reviewing literature about them—you might gain some insight into your own field of practice.

Culture and *profession* are very broad terms for a collection of group behaviours. It is advisable that you first define what culture is—consider using a resource such as *The Penguin Dictionary of Sociology* to define the term. Once you have defined what culture is, develop a list of terms that are applied to culture. Some things to think about include:

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|---------------------|------------|----------------------------|
| ~ language/rhetoric | ~ beliefs | ~ fashion |
| ~ attitudes | ~ humour | ~ music |
| ~ manners | ~ stresses | ~ life (more generic term) |

You will ideally mix-and-match terms from the first list with terms that you develop from the second list. Not all words and combinations will be successful, so you must be persistent.

SEARCH TIPS

PHRASE SEARCHING. By placing a group of words between quotation marks (e.g., “emergency medical services”), you are telling the search engine to search for those words side-by-side. This adds greater precision to the search. This works in the library’s online catalogue, databases, and Web search engines.

AND, OR, and NOT. These words can be used to limit or expand your search. AND between two search terms will limit your search (e.g., *paramedic AND stress* = articles that have both terms), OR will expand your search (e.g., *paramedic OR ems* = articles with either term), and NOT is used to exclude unwanted/unrelated terms (e.g., *paramedic NOT ems* = excludes articles with the term *ems*, even if *paramedic* is present).

TRUNCATION/WILD CARDS. Some search engines let you use truncation to broaden your search results. An asterisk (*) is a common symbol; if you place this symbol at the end of a word, it will find any variety (e.g., *paramedic** = *paramedic*, *paramedics*, *paramedical*, etc.). A wild card is placed in the middle of a word to find variants—the question mark (?) tends to be a common symbol (e.g., *wom?n* = *woman*, *women*, etc.).

LOCATING BOOKS [ONLINE CATALOGUES]

With your list of search terms, you can search a variety of books holdings on campus and off. To search for books that are available at the Medicine Hat College, navigate to the library's website—<http://www.mhc.ab.ca/library>. From the library's homepage, select the link that says: *Books and Audiovisuals*. The *Basic Keyword* or *Advanced Keyword* searches should provide you with the tools you need to locate resources in the library.

No one library can hold all information. You can search libraries throughout Alberta and Canada with a couple of easy to use websites. *The Alberta Library* (TAL; <http://www.talonline.ca/searchalberta/index.jsp>) allows you to search most (if not all) libraries in the province of Alberta all at once. A resource called AMICUS (from the National Library of Canada; <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/amicus/>) will have a search engine that lets you search over 1,300 libraries across Canada.

LOCATING PERIODICAL ARTICLES

Databases (or Online Periodical Indexes) provide you access to journal, magazine and newspaper articles. Some databases provide full-text articles from publications—this means that you will not have to find a print version of the article. This is very convenient, but not always the case—sometimes you will only get a citation or abstract (both are brief summaries of the article). You will have to search the library's Online Catalogue to discovery if the library carries the publication you desire.

Ideally you will want to locate resources that are more academic in nature. When you are in a database, look for a check-box that lets you select: *academic journals*, *blind review*, *juried*, *peer reviewed*, *refereed*, or *scholarly journals*; this will help focus your search. Keep in mind that you might still get items such as book reviews, editorials, letters, etc.; so a “critical eye” is still required.

FIND IT button. Some databases might have citations/abstracts, but the full-text will be available in another database. If you only find the citation/abstract, click the “Find It” button if it is available. This button will link you to the full-text article if it available in another database that the library subscribes to; it might also tell you if the article is available in the library's print holdings.

Databases are located at: <http://www.mhc.ab.ca/library/databases/>; or click the “Journal, Magazine and Newspaper Articles” link from the library’s homepage. Databases that you might consider using include:

- ~ any under the “Multi-Subject Indexes” heading
- ~ any under the “Nursing and Health Sciences” heading
- ~ Canadian NewsStand, Canadian Periodical Index (CPI.Q.), Canadian Reference Centre, CBCA Reference—for potential Canadian content (under the “Canadian Content” heading)
- ~ Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection (under the “Psychology” heading)

WORLD WIDE WEB

If you use the World Wide Web, do so with caution. Not all sources are credible and you must critically evaluate all material that you read. The Web is a great place to get ideas or direction, but not necessarily the best information to employ in your work—try to find a print source to verify what a web page says.

It is also advisable to use multiple search engines (e.g., A9.com, Google.ca, Yahoo.ca, etc.) to gather results. A resource such as *Google Scholar* (<http://scholar.google.ca>) tends to deliver a better class of information than the standard Google search engine. Each engine works a little differently, and the results they produce are different too. Refer to the library’s *Doing Research on the Web: Evaluating Web Sites* guide (<http://www.mhc.ab.ca/library/webbysubject/thinkingcritically.html>) for more detail.

INTERLIBRARY LOANS

As stated earlier, “no one library can hold all information.” To this end, an interlibrary loan (ILL) system has been developed.

If you locate a book or periodical (journal, magazine, or newspaper) article that is not in the library, we can order it for you. There is no cost to acquiring a book or periodical article—no matter where it comes from.

It does take time to acquire materials from other institutions, so plan ahead and order as quickly as possible. It can take 1-3 weeks (typically) to order material—it depends on how far away the item is and how busy the lending institution is.

You can read more about the service at: <http://www.mhc.ab.ca/library/interlibraryloans.html>, and orders are placed at: http://darius.uleth.ca/screens/illreq_s2.html.

ADDITIONAL TIPS

INFORMATION DESK. If you are having difficulty, see the library’s Information Desk for assistance. Additionally, you can contact us via: telephone (403-529-3867), e-mail (reference@mhc.ab.ca); Ask A Question (<http://askaquestion.ab.ca/>); *Library Online Agents* instant messenger (<http://www.mhc.ab.ca/library/im/>); or text message (403-866-5872).

PATIENCE AND PERSISTENCE. Be patient and persistent with your searching, it does take time to produce quality accurate results.