TRAILS Categories and Definitions

1. DEVELOP TOPIC: Identify topical areas; Develop focus

2. IDENTIFY POTENTIAL SOURCES: Understand the types of containers in which information is housed (ex: different types of libraries, books, databases, online catalogs, primary sources, etc.) and the types of information that can be found within each type of container; Understand the roles of differing types of information sources (encyclopedia, atlas, dictionaries, etc.) and finding tools (research databases, online catalog, bibliographic citations, people, etc.); Select the most productive information sources and finding tools to address a given information need

3. DEVELOP, USE, AND REVISE SEARCH STRATEGIES: Understand how to use a given type of information container in order to retrieve information (ex: index and table of contents in a book, types of searches used in an online catalog, etc.); Select search terms; Develop a search strategy for the topic appropriate to a given finding tool; Understand how to use Boolean operators; Revise search strategies when too few, too many, or irrelevant results are returned

4. EVALUATE SOURCES AND INFORMATION: Recognize bias; Differentiate between fact and opinion; Determine the accuracy, authority, coverage, currency, and relevancy of information and/or information sources

5. RECOGNIZE HOW TO USE INFORMATION RESPONSIBLY, ETHICALLY, AND LEGALLY: Recognize how to paraphrase correctly; Understand the concept of intellectual property (especially copyright, fair use, and plagiarism); Understand the concept of intellectual freedom; Create bibliographies and parenthetical citations according to an appropriate style manual