

Data shows that society keeps getting fatter. The US is now considered the “fattest” country on Earth. There are numerous factors that lead to this unhealthy trend. However, the metabolic process of why we are getting fat is what really interested me. After all, health and nutrition have always been an interest of mine. I did a preliminary search as to what causes people to gain weight in such an injurious manner. One of the culprits named unanimously was sugar. But what exactly made sugar so detrimental? I had already taken biochemistry courses here at UMD, which allowed me to understand some of the data and research I was dealing with and saw rough diagrams on how a simple sugar, fructose, was being digested in humans. I decided that for this project in ENG390: Scientific Writing, I was going to research most of the aspects on how fructose gets metabolized, the enzymes utilized, and why it becomes harmful once inside our bodies. By doing this research in this class, it allowed me to research something that I am really interested in, while I was being productive for the class.

During one of the first weeks into the semester, my laptop broke. Thankfully, I had convenient access to the “White Memorial Chemistry Library,” where I did all my research. From there, I would log on and use “Research Port,” accessed from the library’s main page. Then, under the “Databases” tab, I would use the “Quick search in a few databases” function and type key words related to my research. At first, I started really broad and general, using key words such as “fructose metabolism” and “obesity.” However, as my research progressed, I would start using more specific inquiries such as name of enzymes, hormones, and other metabolites (examples include “leptin”, “ChREBP”, and “islets of Langerhans”). Additionally, being a UMD student granted me access to the full journal articles, as opposed to just the abstracts. This access, allowed me to find a wealth of information that would have been otherwise obscured. In short, being in the library allowed me to compose my project in a relatively timely manner through the access of a computer, a word processor, and a database with full access to journal articles.

I did not seek additional help from a professor, a librarian, or anyone else because I really did not think about it. However, upon reflecting on this essay, I would have consulted one of my biochemistry professors for guidance. Furthermore, I would have asked a librarian for help in looking up printed material available in the library.

I employed various techniques to choose which sources I used. First, after doing a search, I would read the abstracts to see if the article pertained to my topic/subject. Next, I would skim the article and see what the general research and information was about, if relevant, I would read the article and take notes on the important facts. Then, I would check its references to check validity and for new sources that I could perhaps use as well. Finally, if there was any new information, I would do a Google/database search to determine if the new piece of information as relevant or not.

I learned a lot from this extensive research that can benefit my academic as well as my professional career. I refined my research capabilities into a more efficient and acute manner. Researching for future projects and papers will be a bit faster and easier now that I know how to look for and at journal articles. I learned that when researching, it is imperative to always take notes of not just the information but also as to where and how you found it. Additionally, I discovered that there is a wealth of information on the internet; it’s just a matter for proficiently looking for what you want. Finally, it takes time to do a quality research.