II. Gather Background Information

A brief background information in your topic would enable you to focus on a theme and an outline effectively. As you peruse the background information make note of relevant issues within your topic, differing issues and definitions of key concepts. Appropriate sources for locating background information include encyclopedias, almanacs and yearbooks, and handbooks and bibliographies. In order to find information on musical improvisation, you need to look for background resources in Music and Performing Arts. You can locate these resources by:

1) searching the Library’s online catalog under the subject heading Encyclopedias and Dictionaries. From the entries retrieved, you may choose the relevant ones.
2) noting the appropriate classification numbers for general and specific resources in the subject area and locate them in the appropriate reference section.
3) using advanced search options via keyword and combining words in general areas such as music, performing arts with such words as encyclopedia, dictionary, etc.

Resources that provide background information include:

1. Encyclopedias –

   General-

   Britannica Online
   http://www.tnstate.edu/library/database/htm#B

   Encyclopedia Americana
   Ref. AE 5 .E333 1996

   Subject-

   Encyclopedia of Popular Music
   Ref. ML 102 .P66 G84 1998

   Garland Encyclopedia of World Music
   Ref. ML 100 .G16 1998

   Illustrated Encyclopedia of Musical Instruments
   Ref. ML 102 .I5 I5 1996

   International Cyclopedia of Music and Musicians
   Ref. ML 100 .T47 1975

   New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*
2. Dictionaries-

**General**

Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary  
Ref. PE 1628 .M36 2000

Random House Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary  
Ref. PE 1625 .R3 2001

**Subject**

Baker’s Dictionary of Opera  
Ref. ML 102 .O6 B26 2000

International Dictionary of Black Composers  
Ref. ML 105 .I5 1999

New Grove Dictionary of Jazz  
Ref. ML 102 .J3 N48 1994

3. Almanacs and Yearbooks-

Infoplease.com (electronic resource)  
http://www.infoplease.com/

4. Handbooks and Bibliographies

American Music Handbook  
Ref. ML 13 .P39

Handbook of Research on Music Teaching and Learning  
Ref. MT 1 .H138 1992

Music Business Handbook  
Ref. ML 3795 .B33 1995
The Music Industry  
Ref. ML 3795 .F497 2000
Music Reference and Research Materials: an
Annotated Bibliography
Ref. ML 113 .D83 1997