My Research Project: Find a Written Conversation

We’re surrounded by written conversations. Some focus on politics, others on sports, and still others on issues in an academic discipline. You’ll find contributions to conversations on the front page of newspapers, on Web sites such as CNN.com and Foxnews.com, in academic and professional journals, and in the blogs at Tumblr or Blogger.com. Spend some time locating a conversation about a topic that interests you. Use the following prompts to find the conversation.

1. **List a topic that interests you.** Because you’ll be searching for sources, jot down a list of search terms, or keywords, that you can use to locate sources on the topic.
2. **Choose a newspaper or magazine or search for sources.** Browse the newspaper or magazine or search for sources on a Web search site, a library database, or a library catalog using the keywords you jotted down about your topic.
3. **Identify sources that seem to address the topic.** Skim each source to get a sense of how it addresses your topic.
4. **Decide whether the sources are engaged in the same conversation.** Ask whether the sources are addressing the same topic. If they are, list the ways in which they are “talking” to one another about the topic. Identify any agreements, disagreements, or differences in their approach to the topic.
5. **Reflect on the conversation.** Ask whether the sources you’ve identified tell you enough to understand the conversation. Consider whether you might need to locate more sources to give you a fuller picture of the conversation.