Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? When doing research, it is better to use printed materials such as books and articles than it is to use the Internet. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

t is critically important that students use the best available resources when they do research.  In my opinion, it is far better to use printed materials than online sources. I feel this way for two reasons, which I will explore in the following essay.

           To begin with, printed materials such as books and articles are more reliable than websites.  This is because websites can be edited by anyone in the world, regardless of whether or not they are qualified academics.  As a result of this, even articles in popular online encyclopedias often contain incorrect and biased information. My own experience demonstrates the danger of relying too heavily on online sources of information.  Two semesters ago, I was assigned a research paper in a freshman biology class. I cited data that I found on Wikipedia which later turned out to be completely incorrect. This data was so hopelessly wrong that my professor spotted it immediately, causing me to fail the assignment and receive a fairly low grade in the class at the end of the semester.  If I had taken the time to compare what I had read online to a book or a scholarly article, I would not have included it, and would not have received such a terrible score in the class.

          Secondly, books are superior to online articles because they cover topics in much detail.  Textbooks are significantly longer than online articles, so they are more useful to students.  Students who use them when doing projects can also look at the detailed indexes which they include to focus on very specific topics. For example, I was assigned an essay last semester in a history class and the very first book that I consulted contained a long description of both the underlying causes and long-term effects of the historical event I was writing about.  In contrast, most of the online articles that I consulted contained little more than superficial facts and dates. I based my research on the book rather than these articles, so I was able to write a very insightful paper.

          In conclusion, I strongly believe that printed information is more useful than online resources.  This is because books and printed journals are less likely to be biased or contain errors, and because books provide a superior level of detail. (383 words)