What are you looking for? What are the facts and legal issues?

A mind map can help you break down your question. For example, you lecture has given you the question:

Example Question:
With the rise of social media more people than ever will be able to have their voices heard. In Australia how does social media affect freedom of speech and should any limits be placed on this freedom?

Break down each of the legal issues in the question and establish areas that you will need to research.

Freedom of speech and social media

- Should any limits be placed on social media?
- What legislation applies, if any?
- Any common law?
- What does Australia think/do/react to concerns over freedom of speech?
- What is the international community doing about freedom of speech and social media?
- Definitions:
  - What is freedom of speech?
  - What is "social media"?
- How is freedom of speech protected?
- Historical development of freedom of speech:
  - Political viewpoint
  - Philosophical viewpoint

What are your key concepts?

From your mind map pick out the key concepts for one of your issues, for example, if I want to find out about the political viewpoint of freedom of speech of Australia, I can pick out words that would describe this issue:

"Freedom of speech" Australia Politics Government

Search Tip:
You may have to undertake different searches for different concepts. For example, one on human rights, one of social media etc.
Plan Your Research

When you have analysed your question and identified your key concepts you can then start to define how you will find information. What database will you choose and how many searches will you need to do to gather all the information?

Choose Your Resources

There are many different places to start finding your resources. Below is a list of some of the places you can start searching and why they are useful.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource Type</th>
<th>Why Start Here?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case Citators</td>
<td>Useful to find relevant case law on a topic. You can search by citation, case name or by keyword.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislation Databases</td>
<td>Legislation databases will not only give you access to legislation but will link to other relevant material. For example, the LawNow database will also link you to case law and other sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td>Recent books will give you an overview of the law and guide you to relevant case law, legislation and give you an analysis on the law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Dictionaries</td>
<td>Useful for defining terms and understanding key concepts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Encyclopaedia</td>
<td>Legal Encyclopaedia’s, such as Halsbury’s, will help you understand the main legal principles in an area and also guide you to case law and legislation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal Databases</td>
<td>Academic journals will provide you with legal analysis as well as professional opinion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commentary Services</td>
<td>Commentary will lead to you main legal issues and also to other relevant resources.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You may like to start with secondary sources such as books and dictionaries if you know little about a topic to get an overview of the law. After an initial secondary source search you may have to use case citators and legislation databases for the original sources of the law as well as journal articles for in-depth analysis.
Analysis Your Results

Not all legal information is created equal. Create a plan for the most important resources on your topic. This will assist you in deciding whether you have gathered enough information or whether there are gaps in your research. It is also important to critically analyse your resources to determine their quality.

Document Your Research and Refine

As you research it is important to record your process. Record the name of the database you used and the key words that you used to get results, this will assist you in determining if you need to use other resources or change your keywords and refine your search. It is also important to document the resources that you find as this will assist you with referencing in your assignment.