

Research Help:

Searching for Magazine, Journal & Newspaper Articles in Library Databases: Research Tips & Strategies

Basic Search	Advanced Search	More Search Strategies
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Constructing a good search can save you a lot of time and effort. By creating better searches, you can eliminate many irrelevant hits. The following search tips and strategies can successfully help you find what you are looking for.

Basic Search

Most library magazine, journal, and newspaper databases work in the same way. There is a search box in which to place search words and then you simply click on the search button. There are a few other tips you should know to get the best results. Look at the following example:

The image shows a search interface with several callout boxes explaining search tips:

- Truncation:** Use the asterisk (*) to find all forms of a word. For example, smok* will find smoke, smokes, smoking, smoker and smokers.
- AND:** Combine search words with AND.
- Date Range:** Select a date range to find more recent articles or articles from a certain time period.
- Limiters:** To find articles that contain only the full text of an article and articles from scholarly or peer-reviewed journals, check these boxes when available.

The search interface includes a search box containing the text "smok* and women and effects", a "Search" button, and a "Clear" button. Below the search box are fields for "Database:", "Date range:" (set to "All dates"), and "Limit results to:" with two checked options: "Full text documents only" and "Scholarly journals, including peer-reviewed".

Advanced Search

Most library databases will have an advanced search option that allows you to search for terms found in either the title, subject, author, publication name or other portion of the article. This type of searching is more efficient in that the words being searched have to be found in one of those areas or fields in order to come up in the results list.

The screenshot shows an advanced search interface. On the left, there are three search rows. The first row contains the text "secondhand smoke". The second row has a dropdown menu set to "AND" followed by the text "women". The third row has a dropdown menu set to "AND NOT" followed by the text "pregnant". Below these rows are links for "Add a row" and "Remove a row". To the right of the search rows is a dropdown menu for selecting the search field. The dropdown is currently set to "Citation and document text" and is open, showing a list of search fields: Citation and abstract, Citation and document text, Abstract, Author, Company/Org, Document feature, Document ID, Document language, Document text, Document title (highlighted), Document type, Image caption, Location, NAICS code, Person, Product name, Publication title, Section, and Subject. Two callout boxes provide additional information: one titled "Boolean Searching" explains the use of AND, OR, and AND NOT operators, and another titled "Field Searching" explains that the word "secondhand smoke" must be in the article title.

Boolean Searching
Combine your words with AND, OR, or AND NOT by using a drop-down menu. In this example, you would find articles on secondhand smoke and women excluding articles about pregnant women.

Field Searching
Select where you want your word to appear by using a drop-down menu. In this example, "secondhand smoke" must be in the article title.

More Search Strategies

If you are still having problems finding information, try the following search strategies:

1. Try Different Wording (Synonyms)

Think of different words that describe your topic.

Example: secondhand smoke

Try: passive smoking

2. Try a Broader Search

Sometimes you may choose a topic that little has been written about or appears in a chapter of a book rather than in the main title. Try to think of a broader term that encompasses your topic. The more general the search, the more likely you are to retrieve additional records.

Example: cigars

Try: tobacco

3. Phrase Searching

Putting “quotes” around your search words tells the database that you are looking for that exact phrase.

Example: “secondhand smoke”

4. Contact a librarian if you need more help.

[Ask a Librarian](#): 24/7 Chat with a librarian. Accessible from the PC Library Home page

Library Reference Desk (602) 285-7470