Library

Arts: finding articles on your topic

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# Introduction

There are lots of different ways to find journal articles on your topic. This guide will tell you what’s available and give some of the pros and cons of each resource.

# Library Search

Library Search enables you to access articles from the journals we subscribe to. It’s a quick and easy way to access articles. Bear in mind, however, that there are many thousands of different journals on multiple different subjects, so the Library can’t subscribe to everything. There are other sources available for finding out about articles in journals we don’t subscribe to.

**Advantages**:

If you want to find out about articles that you will be able to access immediately then Library Search is the best place to look.

Library Search is multidisciplinary, so it’s particularly good for topics that span more than one subject area.

**Disadvantages**:

It can be hard to focus in your results

It doesn’t include details of all articles relevant to your topic.

# Subject databases

**Subject databases** are a key tool for finding journal articles and other types of publication.

Databases cover a wide range of subjects – some are multidisciplinary, and others cover more specific subjects. The Library normally pays a subscription for them, and so you will need your GUID to log in. There are various different types of database.For most Arts subjects you need to search a range of databases to find all the publications relevant to your topic.

**Advantages**:   
  
Subject databases are designed specifically to help you find publications on your topic.

Enable you to find high quality, peer reviewed information. Help you to perform a comprehensive search for material on your topic.

You can search in a very precise way.

They only contain references to or the full text of academic articles and other publications.

You can save useful results and format them into the citation style you need for assignments.

**Disadvantages**:

You will normally need to search more than one subject databases to find all relevant articles.

You need to know which databases are the best ones to search for your topic.

Not all databases give direct links to full text, so you may need to go back and check Library Search to see if we have the publication you need.

# Google Scholar

If you are going to use a freely available search engine to look for articles then Google Scholar (<http://scholar.google.co.uk>) will probably find better results than the standard version of Google.

**Advantages**:

Should only find scholarly literature.

Content is multidisciplinary, so good for interdisciplinary topics

**Disadvantages**:

You may not always be able to immediately open full text articles directly, even where the Library has a subscription.

The search interface is not as sophisticated as that offered by databases.

Some of the material available via subscription databases is not findable by Google Scholar.

# Electronic and print reference books and encyclopedias

Depending on your subject area there may be very useful reference works and encyclopedias that provide lists of articles in your topic (bibliographies). Some examples are:

English Literature: Dictionary of Literary Biography Gen Lit qE10 DIC

History of Art**:** [Grove Art Online](http://encore.lib.gla.ac.uk/iii/encore/record/C__Re1000028__Sgrove%20art__Orightresult__U__X6?lang=eng&suite=cobalt)

Music: [Grove Music Online](http://encore.lib.gla.ac.uk/iii/encore/record/C__Re1000017__Sgrove%20music__Orightresult__U__X6?lang=eng&suite=cobalt)

Contact your College Librarian for advice on useful reference sources for your topic.

# Why don’t I just use Google?

Databases are designed specifically to help you find good quality academic information from sources that have undergone some form of evaluation or peer review. Search engines such as Google are useful in a range of ways, and you can use them to find academic information but you need to be aware of the pros and cons.

**Strengths** – finding answers to specific questions, getting an overview of a new topic, getting some information where you are struggling to find anything on a topic, finding information on current or recent topics, finding openly available material.

**Weaknesses** – potential poor quality of information – there is no quality control of information, some of which will be inaccurate, biased or unreliable. Too much information – hard to filter down results to a manageable level. Tailored search results if you have a Google account – not always helpful for academic searching, as material may be filtered out.

# How do I search?

See the guides on **Starting your Arts dissertation** and **Using Arts subject databases** for help with choosing keywords and carrying out searches.

# Get more help

If you need help working out which search tools will be most helpful for your topic you can get in touch with your College Librarian.

Richard Bapty (richard.bapty@glasgow.ac.uk) and Morag Greig (morag.greig@glasgow.ac.uk) are the Arts College Librarians. See Choose your subject on the Library page for students to find out who supports your subject area.

You can make an appointment to see us using the link on the Library page for students.