Literature Searching

Plan your search
4 steps to finding literature

1. Identify keywords
2. Decide where to search
3. Search
4. Review results
Devising a Search Strategy

Why use a search strategy?

- Keeps you in control
- Allows you to piece together more relevant results
- Allows you to search the same way in many sources – consistency
- Helps you to keep track of your searches
- Saves you time
Consider your topic

- Define what you are looking for – this could be a statement or a question

Example: **drug use amongst teenagers involved in crime**

Aim for a core statement or question that expresses what the research will address. (Parameters such as place, population, date range can be added as the research progresses)

**Task 1** Write down the topic that you will be researching
Identify concepts and keywords - tips

Identify the subject areas of your topic:
Example: psychology, sociology, criminology, youth studies, health

Think about the different aspects you are interested in:
Example: geographic aspect could be North East or social aspects could cover anti-social behaviour or unemployment etc.
Think creatively

Task 2  Think of all the different aspects and alternative words that describe your topic

Criminal behaviour  Teenagers  Drugs  Youths
Crime  Anti-social behaviour  Illegal substances
Organising keywords

- Split your topic into its key concepts
- For each key concept think of alternative keywords or phrases to describe that concept and put them into an order

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drug Use</th>
<th>Crime</th>
<th>Teenagers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illegal substances</td>
<td>Criminal behaviour</td>
<td>Youths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td>ASBO</td>
<td>Young people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Your dissertation topic may be more complex than our example. You may need to do separate searches for each aspect.
- **Task 3** Identify and organise your keywords
Building up your search effectively

- Boolean searching, using AND, OR
- Truncation / Wildcards
- Phrase searching
- Searching in the best field
Broden Search

teenagers OR youth
Narrow Search

drugs AND crime
Use **AND** and **OR** to combine your keywords

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Search 1</th>
<th>Drugs OR illegal substance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Search 2</td>
<td>Teenagers OR young people OR Adolescents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search 3</td>
<td>Crime or criminal behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search 4</td>
<td>results of searches 1 AND 2 AND 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search 1</td>
<td>Drugs AND young people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search 2</td>
<td>Drugs AND young people AND crime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search 3</td>
<td>Drugs AND young people AND (crime OR criminal behaviour OR ASBO)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Advanced Search Techniques

- Truncation
  - Crim*
- Wildcards
  - behavio#r
  - wom?n
- Phrase Searching
  - “drug use”
- Searching by Field
  - e.g. by author, keyword, title
Advanced Search Techniques

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term(s)</th>
<th>Alternative way of searching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Young people</td>
<td>“Young people”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime OR Crimes OR Criminal</td>
<td>Crim*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour OR behavior</td>
<td>Behavio#r</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Task 4** Apply these techniques to your search strategy
Planning your search - Summary

- Why you need a search strategy
- Consider your topic
- Identify your concepts and keywords
- Think creatively
- Organise your keywords - consider how to link them together in your search
- Advanced search techniques
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Literature Searching

Where to search?
Section Outcomes

At the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Use Discovery to search for books and journal articles
- Use LibGuides to search for resources in your subject area
- Find journal articles for your topic
  - Choose relevant online databases to search
  - Set up an account to save your searches
  - Practise search techniques to improve your search
- Know how to access other libraries
Discovery: the Library’s rich resources in one place

- Single search
- Find books, journal articles, newspapers and other resources
- Scholarly resources which you need for your dissertation
## Focus on academic resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>What is it?</th>
<th>Why is it useful?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book/ebook ✅</td>
<td>A single work written on a subject. Can cover any topic. Background or in-depth information. Contains summaries of research on the topic.</td>
<td>Lots of information on one subject. Background to a topic. Puts the topic in context with other issues. Summaries of the research can support your argument.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal articles ✅</td>
<td>Can cover very specific topics. Many journals go through a peer review process so high quality. Authors have done extensive research to write it so there are long lists of references.</td>
<td>Very specialised information. Up-to-date. Shows current thinking on a topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magazine articles ?</td>
<td>Can contain news, opinions, research. Subjects covered can be broader than a journal. Some may be peer-reviewed.</td>
<td>Less specialised information. Up-to-date. Shorter articles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper articles ?</td>
<td>Short pieces on current events or issues. Published daily.</td>
<td>Snapshot of opinion at a given point in time. Can lead you to further research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference papers ?</td>
<td>Presentations from a conference. Often the first time the research has been made available.</td>
<td>Recent research on a topic. Very specialised information. Highly regarded for some subjects – less valued for others.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Search Discovery

- Look at the search strategy you planned earlier
- Enter the keywords
- Look at the results
  - Are they relevant?
  - Do you have too many or not enough?
- Do you need to refine your search?
  - Narrow the scope of your original search by limiting the content type or discipline
  - Limit the time period

Task 5 Use your search strategy to search Discovery
4 steps to finding literature

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Task 6 Find the LibGuides for your dissertation subjects
Finding Journal Articles – use online databases
Online Databases

- You can carry out more precise/focussed searches on online databases than on Discovery

- There are many different online databases
  - There is no need to be an expert on them all
  - Many have similar features

- Use the online databases that are relevant to your subject area
  - e.g. PsycINFO contains journal articles on the subjects of psychology, psychiatry, physiology and sociology

- Some allow you to set up an account to save your searches
Choose online databases

- Use the database descriptions to decide which databases to include in your search

- Be aware that:
  - Some only provide abstracts (summaries)
  - Some may only index journal articles but many include other sources such as conference papers and reports
  - If you need historical research some databases only cover certain years

**Task 7** Identify online databases for your subject
Set up an account

- Many databases allow you to save your searches
- You can re-run searches at a later date when new articles may have been published

**Task 8** Set up a login and password to save your searches
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Search online databases

- Look at the search strategy you planned earlier
- Enter the keywords
- Use techniques such as truncation and phrase searches
- Combine searches using boolean operators
- Look at the results
  - Are they relevant?
  - Do you have too many or not enough?
- Do you need to refine the search
  - Broaden or narrow the scope of your original search by changing the keywords
  - Limit the time period
  - Filter by age group, research articles etc.

**Task 9** Use your search strategy to search the databases
Examine your results closely

- **Author**
  - Written other similar papers?

- **Publication**
  - Browse other issues of journals?

- **References**
  - Previous research to read

- **Citations**
  - Research which has quoted this paper

- **Keywords**
  - Lead to other records on the subject
Searching the Internet

- Scholarly Literature

- Personalise Google Scholar
- Find it @ Tees
Beyond Teesside University Library

- **Interlibrary loans**
  - Allowed 20 per academic year
  - Request via ILL libguide [http://libguides.tees.ac.uk/ILL](http://libguides.tees.ac.uk/ILL)
  - Delivered by post or email
  - Plan ahead

- **Visiting other libraries**
  - Darlington Campus – Inter-site loan service
  - SCONUL Access [http://www.sconul.ac.uk/](http://www.sconul.ac.uk/)
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