

Finding Books

Hello. This quick tutorial will show you how to find books in the library.

We can search for books from the library's homepage. If you know what book you want, you can run a title or author search, but when you don't have a particular book in mind, a keyword search is usually going to work the best.

Let's say I was going to write an essay in which I would argue that McDonald's makes kids fat. If I plug the keywords McDonald's kids and fat into my search, I'm not going to get any results. When you do keyword searching, you're only going to get results if items have exactly the words we search for. If you run a search and don't get any hits, think about whether there might be some synonyms or alternative words you could search for. In this example, fast food would be a good alternative for McDonald's, children would be a good alternative for kids, and obesity would be a good alternative for fat.

A nice trick that will work in the catalog is to put an asterisk after the root of a word that could end in a number of different ways. I'll put an asterisk after the d in child so that I can get the words, child, childhood, or children, instead of just children.

Now when we run our search, we get several hits instead of none.

We'll look through our list of results and click on the title of anything that looks like a possibility. I'll click on *Food*. The next screen gives us a little more information about the book. From that first screen, it was very difficult to know if this book would be useful or not. Scanning through the table of contents here, it does look like this book could be useful.

If I decide I want to get this book, the info I need is right here. I can see that there is a copy here at ARC. It's on the third floor and it is available. I would find it using this call number. If you're not familiar with libraries and call numbers, don't be shy about asking a librarian how to find the book.

There is also a copy of this book at Sac City, so if the ARC copy was checked out, I could click on the request button to have Sac City's copy sent here. That would typically take about 2-3 days.

That was a very quick introduction to using the library's catalog. There are several other things that we could do if you're ever looking for books and you're not having success, ,

come talk to a librarian. You can also contact a librarian using any of the options on the library's Get Help page.