

## Finding Books

Hello. My name's David McCusker. I'm one of the librarians at American River College. This quick tutorial will show you how to find books for a research assignment.

From the library's homepage, we'll just click on library catalog. You can see that the catalog starts us off with a simple keyword search. Over on the left, we do have an author and a title search. So if we came to the library looking for George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, we could run either of those searches. If I were looking for a textbook that my instructor put on reserve, I might run a reserves 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 my goal was to convince my reader 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 we do keyword searching, we're only going to get results if items have exactly the words we search for. McDonald's makes kids fat just isn't the kind of language that people who are writing stuff appropriate for college level research are going to use. So, we need to think about whether there might be some synonyms or alternative words we could search for. 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, so if you ever try a search and don't find anything, brainstorm some different terms and try some different searches. Of course, a librarian would also be happy to help you put together a search.

We'll look through our list of results and click on the title of anything that looks like a possibility. I'll click on *Ending the Food Fight*. This gives us a little more information about the book. One helpful thing we find on the next screen is the book's subject headings. The subject headings can help us determine if the book will be useful for us, but it can also help us find more books on this same topic. If I click on the subject heading, Obesity in children – popular works (and popular works just means that it's written for a layperson), the catalog will show me that there are a total of six books on that topic. Some of the other subject headings might also be useful.

Let's get back to that first screen. You can see that ARC does own a copy of this book and it is available. Unfortunately, while the library building is being remodeled, the vast majority of the library's books are in storage. Because it's in storage, I would need to request the book. To get this book, you'd just click on request, and then put in your student id number. Under step 2, you would put in your unified password, the password you use to get into eservices. Under step 3 we would choose where we would like to pick up the book. We can skip step 4, then click submit. On the next page we choose which copy of the book we'd like to request. You can see that there is also a copy at Folsom Lake. You can request books from the other Los Rios Colleges; they'll take about 2-3 business days to get to ARC. If the ARC copy was checked out, you'd request the Folsom Lake copy. However, since we have it available here at ARC, we'd request it, as that will take just 2-3 hours for us to get it, rather than 2-3 days. Library staff retrieve requested books from the warehouse throughout the day. A few hours after you place the request, your book should be available for pick up in room 603.

That was a very quick introduction to using the library's catalog. There several other things that we could do if you're ever using the catalog and you're not having success, you're not finding any books or you're finding way too many books, come talk to a librarian. You'll find the librarians in room 605 in the portables. You can also contact a librarian using any of the options on the library's Ask a Librarian page.