

Finding Psychology Articles

This quick tutorial will show you how to find magazine and journal articles for your psychology research.

We'll get into the library databases from the library's homepage by either clicking on Research Databases or Find Articles. You can see that there are databases covering a variety of topics. Since you're doing research for a psych class, I'd suggest starting with the psychology database. Depending on your topic there may be other databases worth exploring, but if you see how this database works, you won't have any trouble trying the others on your own.

Since I'm on campus, I get right into the database. If I were off campus, I'd be prompted to enter my student id number and my password.

The database starts us off with a keyword search. Let's say that I'm researching how stress experienced by a mother affects a fetus? The keywords I'd search for would be stress, mother, and fetus. I'll run my search.

I get 17 hits. It does look like some of these articles would be good for me. I could certainly stop at this point and look at these articles. But one thing to keep in mind when you're doing keyword searching is that you only find things that use the keywords you searched for. When you do a search and don't get very many hits, you want to consider whether there might be some alternative terms you could search for. And looking at these articles we can get some good ideas for other terms. In addition to searching for mother I could search for maternal. In addition to fetus, I could try fetal and prenatal. I'm going to put the alternative terms for each other in parentheses and connect them with the word or. Now I'll get articles that use the word stress, use either mother or maternal and use either fetus, fetal, or prenatal. I'll run my search and you can see that I've gotten many more hits.

Connecting terms with or and the word and and with parentheses is something we could spend a lot of time on. We're not going to do that here. There are two things I want you to keep in mind though. If you're not getting hits, think of other terms to search for. And, we can do some pretty sophisticated searching in the databases, so if you're not having success, talk with a librarian, because there are a lot of different things we could try that we don't have time to cover here.

Over on the left hand side of the page, you can see that there is an option to limit results to full text. Full text just means that we can actually get the entire article right here in the database. If we can scan through the results, you can see that most of these articles have a link to the full text. You can click there to start reading the article. If there's no link to the full text, we can't actually get the article through this database. If you find an article that looks really good and there's no full text, you can ask a librarian if there's some other way to get it. However, if you have a lot of hits, or if you don't have time to track down articles that aren't in the database, it makes sense to limit results to full text.

We could also narrow our results by date. Depending on the topic you're researching, you may want to limit your results to very current articles.

Finally, you may want to limit results to scholarly journal articles. Scholarly journal articles differ from magazine articles in that they are going to be written and reviewed by experts and are going to go into significant depth. Some instructors will require you to use scholarly journal articles. The majority of what you find in this database will be scholarly journal articles, but if you want to make sure you're only using journal articles, check this box.

Once you have a manageable number of hits, start scanning through your results. Anything that looks like a possibility, we can just click on the title. That will take us to the abstract. The abstract is a summary of the article. We'll read that summary and if we think the article is useful, we can click on the full text link to get into the article or we can print, or save, or email the article to ourselves.

When you do print or email an article, you can make the database create an APA citation for the article. The database does sometimes make errors, so you do need to double check the citations, but having the database create the citation will save you a lot of time.

I hope this tutorial was helpful. It was just an introduction so please consult with a librarian if you're not having success. You can find all the different ways you can contact a librarian on the library's [Get Help](#) page.