

# Finding Journal Articles on Your Topic

Swem Library • College of William and Mary

1. **START** at Swem Library's home page: [swem.wm.edu](http://swem.wm.edu)
2. Click on **Databases** or **Subject Guides**.
3. If you chose **Databases**, next click on a database subject category for your topic.
  - For example, for sociology topics, choose the Sociology or the Social Sciences group of databases.

If you chose **Subject Guides**, next click on the appropriate field.

  - For example, for sociology topics, choose the "Sociology" subject guide. Then scroll to the section about journal databases.
4. **CHOOSE A DATABASE:** from the list of databases, select one that covers the topic and time period you need.
5. **CHOOSE BASIC OR ADVANCED SEARCHING:** on the search screen for that database, select Basic or Advanced searching and note other options for limiting or refining your search (by dates, languages, full-text, etc.). **Advanced Searching** is recommended.
6. **TRUNCATION & WILDCARDS:** click the database's **Help** button to learn how to truncate words, use wildcard symbols for variant spellings, etc. These search strategies will ensure that you retrieve all relevant results and will also save you time!
7. **COMBINING SEARCH TERMS:** enter your search terms, combined with **AND** or **OR**:  
  
**AND**  
In almost all cases, your research will involve two or more *concepts*. An example is how *poverty* affects *education* in *Mexico*. To find books on that topic, combine the concepts with **AND**.  
Example: ***education AND poverty AND Mexico***  
  
**OR**  
To broaden your search so that you find all the relevant books on your topic, use synonyms or variations of your search terms. Combine these similar terms with **OR** and use parentheses.  
Example: ***education OR teaching***  
  
**AND with OR**  
For more than one concept, if using synonyms, use **AND** and **OR** like this:  
Example: ***(education OR teaching) AND (poverty OR poor) AND Mexico***
8. **PHRASES:** in most journal databases, use double quote marks around phrases:  
Example: ***"child development" AND (poverty OR poor)***
9. Click the **Search** button. [This button might be labeled **Find, Go, Submit, Browse**, etc.]

10. **IMPROVE YOUR SEARCH:** from the list of journal articles that appears, pick one or more that look good for your topic and look at the full record to see the **subject headings** or **descriptors**. Use these terms for new searches to find more and better titles.

11. **TRY ANOTHER DATABASE:** need more articles? repeat the steps above, using another database.

12. **CHOOSE THE ARTICLES:** mark the articles that are best for your topic. In some databases, there might be a box to check or a link to **mark, add, or save** each citation.

13. **FULL-TEXT ELECTRONIC ARTICLES:** if the database provides full-text articles, you'll see a link for **full-text** or **pdf**. Click these links to open the full-text. To print a pdf file, be sure to click the **printer icon in the Adobe software** that opens, **not** the File—Print option.

14. **NON-FULL-TEXT ELECTRONIC ARTICLES:** If the articles are not in electronic full-text, here's how to find out if the journals you need are available at William & Mary:

- keep open the **results list** in the database that you searched.
- open a **second copy of your browser** (such as Internet Explorer).
- go to Swem Library's home page ([swem.wm.edu](http://swem.wm.edu)) and click on **Library Catalog**.
- type or paste in the **journal name** (e.g., Journal of Social Psychology)
- click **BEGINS WITH**
- click **PERIODICAL TITLE**
- in the list that appears, if there's a match, **click on the matching title**
- if there's more than one match, check each by clicking on the **DETAILS** button and then the **ITEM INFORMATION** tab to view issues owned by each library, the format (bound journals; microfilm; etc.)
- for many journals, you'll see an **Electronic Access link** that will take you to a database that has the journal in full-text. You may need to browse for the specific volume and issue.
- if we do not have the journal in electronic full-text, it may be available in a paper issue on the current periodical shelves, bound and shelved in the Stacks, or on microfilm. Please ask Reference for assistance.
- **if there's no match**, contact the Swem Library Reference Department at 757-221-3067 or [sweref@wm.edu](mailto:sweref@wm.edu) for assistance.

### **Selected Journal Locations in Swem Library**

- **STACKS:** shelved with the books, with the call number shown in the Library Catalog
- **MICROFORMS:** microfilm or microfiche cabinets; ask at Reference
- **INTERNET:** may be available online; click on the link in the Library Catalog
- **OFF-SITE:** ask at Circulation or Reference about how to request
- **ARCHIVES or SPECIAL COLLECTIONS:** call Special Collections at 757-221-3090
- **CURRENT PERIODICAL SHELVES:** newest issues of some journals; on Swem's 2<sup>nd</sup> floor

### **Can't find the journal articles that you need? Need to borrow an article from another library?**

Contact the Reference Desk at 757-221-3067 or [sweref@wm.edu](mailto:sweref@wm.edu).

The librarians can recommend other search terms and other journal databases.

### **Journals that you need not on the shelves?**

Contact the Circulation Department in person, at 757-221-3072, or at [swcirc@wm.edu](mailto:swcirc@wm.edu).