

How to Find Periodical Articles

DEFINITIONS

Periodical: A publication published at regular intervals (e.g., weekly, monthly). Most common examples of periodicals are: magazines, newspapers, and journals.

Periodical index: Periodical indexes list articles which have appeared in journals, magazines, or newspapers. They are searchable by author, title, or subject. Most of the periodical indexes at Murray Library are electronic and are referred to as **databases**. The library has a small amount of print indexes located behind the Reference Desk.

FINDING PERIODICAL ARTICLES

1. Select an appropriate index/database.

If you do not know which index to search, check one from the “Find...Articles/Databases/Subjects” link on the Library home page. (The library catalog does *not* index articles.) You may need to search more than one index/databases.

Consider:

- **Subjects.** Some databases cover only one main subject; some cover a related group of subjects. Only a few cover all subjects — e.g., Academic Search Complete, Reader’s Guide Retrospective.
- **Dates of articles.** Most databases go back to articles published in the 1980s; some go much further back.
- **Types of material.** Most databases cover **journals** (scholarly and professional periodicals). **Newspapers** are usually indexed by special indexes covering only newspapers, such as the databases Newsbank and Newspaper Source. A few databases cover all types of periodicals, and some also cover essays, reports, government documents, chapters in books, and monographs.
- **Information provided.** All indexes give the **citation** (author, title of article, title of periodical, volume number, issue number, page numbers, date). Many provide an **abstract** (summary of article). A few present the **full text** (complete article, sometimes with graphics).

2. Search the index/database.

Most databases are friendly enough to use without instruction. Never hesitate to ask a Reference librarian, even before you begin.

If only the citation and abstract are provided, print out or write down the information you need. If you end up requesting an article on Interlibrary Loan or citing it in your paper, you will need the complete citation. Otherwise, title of periodical, date, and page numbers are all you need.

3. Get the article.

- **If the article is full-text in the database**, read it on the screen, e-mail it to yourself, download it, send it to RefWorks, or print it out. If not full-text in the database, look for a link to full text in another database or in the Library Catalog (which will indicate what Messiah has in print form).

Note: A database may provide full text for your periodical but not for the year you need.



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- **If Messiah *has* your periodical in paper format, find it in the stacks.**

All periodicals, whether scholarly journals or popular magazines, are shelved alphabetically by title in the Periodical stacks. Except for the first "*The*," every word counts, including *Journal* and *the*. Initials are treated as words unless followed by periods (almost never), e.g. *CQ Researcher* follows *Courier*. All are shelved on the mezzanine at the far end of the first floor.

The most recent **newspapers** (2-3 days) are shelved in racks. Back paper copies (1 month to 2 years) are shelved at the far end of the mezzanine of the Periodicals area. The Library has back issues of the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Christian Science Monitor, and the Wall Street Journal available electronically (from the Library's home page).

- **If no full-text copy is available, request the article on Interlibrary Loan.**

If you found the article in a database that has a direct link for ordering articles, please use that. If not, go to the Library home page and click on the "Interlibrary Loan" link. In any case, you do *not* need to know what library has your periodical.

Usually articles requested through Interlibrary loan arrive electronically within a few days. No charge. **Limit of 10 requests per course.**

- **If you cannot wait for Interlibrary Loan, visit an area library.**

To find out what colleges in our area carry your periodical, search "WorldCat" (linked on the Library's home page under "Quicklinks" (at right)). In WorldCat, type in the title of your periodical and change "keyword" to "title" at the right. Scroll down and click on the box for "Serial Publications" and then click on "Search". Select the relevant entry from the results (there are often several entries) and then click on the link "Libraries worldwide that own item." Look for libraries in our area that hold your periodical. **IMPORTANT:** Make sure they carry the specific volume you need (under column marked "Local Holdings").