

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.

FINDING PERIODICAL ARTICLES

1. Select an appropriate index/database.

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

Consider:

- **Subjects.** Some databases cover only one main subject; some cover a related group of subjects. Only a few daabases cover a broad range of subjects—e.g., Academic Search Ultimate database.
- **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 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). Many databases also provide the full text of the article in pdf or html format.

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. A few search tips that work in most databases;

- Do not search the entire research question or thesis statement. Instead, think of a few keywords about your topic and search for those words.
- Find one or two relevant articles and look for the SUBJECT words. Review your search strategy with those subject words.
- Use limits to further narrow your results list such as publication year and publication type.

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 to your computer, save it to citation management software such as Zotero, or print it out.
- If not full-text in the database, look for a **link to full text in another database**. If the link does not work correctly, search the Journals Titles A-Z link on the library homepage to determine what database has the journal.
- If Messiah has your periodical in **print format**, find it in the Periodical Alcove stacks. All periodicals, whether scholarly journals or popular magazines, are shelved alphabetically by title in the Periodical alcove. If you cannot find a periodical article that should be available in print, ask for assistance at the Circulation Desk.
- If the periodical is not available in the library collection, 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 link. If not, go to the Library home page and click on the “Interlibrary Loan” link and complete the request form. Usually articles requested through Interlibrary loan arrive electronically within a few days at no charge to you