Tips and Tricks for Searching (& More)

1. Keywords

Don't just type your assignment question into the search box.
Don't search for words such as evaluate, assess, critically analyse.

Do think about the keywords in your assignment title.
Do think about other words that could be used to describe your topic
Do use a thesaurus (plenty online) a dictionary or lecture notes to generate ideas.

2. The library Catalogue

Use “Books and More” to find books, journals titles, quality websites.

Use “Articles” to find articles in many but not all of the eResources (databases)

Use to Reserve copies of books on loan to other readers and stop the automatically renewals process. Sign in to request a book on loan.

Use Details tab to see subject terms and consider searching on these Read description of the book/journal

Use to find and read eBooks – click “view online”

Use sorted by to find the newest, most popular titles etc

Note the location number (also known as the dewey number) and the first three letters of the author’s surname to quickly find books on the shelf

Note the colour of the label on spine of book – yellow is a reference book and cannot be borrowed, Green is a one week loan and no coloured label is a three week loan
3. **eResources (databases)**

**Do** think about how you connect your search terms – keywords.

**AND** looks for documents that contain **all** of your words – the more words you connect with AND the fewer results you will find. Most databases (eResources) assume that terms entered are being connected by AND unless you actively type OR or change the drop down box on Sports Discus to OR.

**OR** connects words that mean the same (synonyms) – eg youth, adolescent, teenager and looks for articles that contain any of the words. Use to broaden your search and find more articles.

Synonyms can be entered using *brackets* to link them together and linked to AND eg

Smoking **AND** (youth OR young people OR adolescents OR teenagers)

**Remember** – things in brackets are actioned first so the database finds all the articles with *youth OR young people OR adolescents OR teenagers* in and then looks within those for articles that also contain the word *smoking*.

**Not** looks for documents that contain one of your words but **NOT** the other – eg tea NOT coffee - will reject any article that contain the word coffee –this can be risky as the article may actually be about coffee and tea is merely mentioned, perhaps as a comparison.

**Do** consider ticking the *“Peer Reviewed”* box to limit your search to the most academic or scholarly articles.

**Do** evaluate your results - *Currency, Reliability, Authority, Point of View*
Do use other tricks for increasing or narrowing your search.

The following two are the most useful tricks and work on most eResources including Google Scholar. The help function on the individual databases will provide more detail and help.

" " (quote marks) looks for phrases – eg "women athletes" “Southampton Football Club”

Asterisk *. To use truncation, enter the root of a search term and replace the ending with an * -- eg football* will find football, footballs, footballer, footballers, etc

Sports Discus Tricks

N5 Near Operator (N) - N5 finds the words if they are within five words of one another regardless of the order in which they appear (on Sports Discus). You can alter the number after the N - N15 would be same sentence, etc

W8 Within Operator (W) - In the following example, W8 finds the words if they are within eight words of one another and in the order in which you entered them. Again you can alter the number after the W.

# behavio#r - will help with alternative spellings (although most databases will automatically search for American variants of words.

Proquest Business

? The question mark symbol (?) is the Wildcard character, used to replace any single character, either inside or at the right end of the word (similar to # in Sports Discus)

n/5 is the format for the Near search (note the /)

Google Scholar

Do use Google Scholar and follow the “fulltext @SSU” links (automatically set on campus computers)

Do set Google Scholar to link to SSU on your own computers by:

- Clicking Settings
- Clicking “Library Links” and entering Southampton Solent in the search box
- Clicking “Save”
General eResource Tips

Do click on the “is it@SSU” icon to check to see if the article is available on another eResource (database) or in print in the library.

Do try copying and pasting article titles we do not have access to into Google Scholar and seeing if it is available elsewhere

Tip:
Accessing eResources and databases off-campus. Generally ignore any box that asks for your email and password as this is for people with personal subscriptions. You need to look for access via your library, via Shibboleth, or via your institution. The University does not use Athens as a method of authentication.

TIP:
Do collect a copy of the Harvard Referencing Handout
Do consider using one of the tools available to manage your referencing
RefWorks.

TIP:
Do contact the Information Librarian for Sport, Health and Social Science if you need more help with library resources
Kate Stephenson
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Don’t panic!