WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A LIBRARY DATABASE:

Basic Searching
Look for these 5 features in a LIBRARY database – What’s available?:

**Content:**
What topics, publication formats are found in the database?

**Controlled Vocabulary:**
Subject Guide Search; Subject terms with search results?

**Basic Searching:**
Browse Lists; 1 Search Box; Other basic features

**Advanced Searching:**
> 1 Search Box (combine words); Limits; Search History?

**Special Features:**
Citation tool; Downloading capabilities, etc.?
Basic Searching: Common Features Found in Library Databases

Most library databases will provide researchers with search features similar to this:

- **Browse lists** for reviewing main topics (not commonly present; but if available, explore them!)
- **Boxes** for typing in search words (commonly present)
- **Basic search tools** that will result in more relevant search results (commonly available)
- **Bridges** (i.e., citation info.) that will link you to articles and other resources (commonly present)

Whenever you start a new database search, look for and use the 4 Bs!!!
Browse Lists: The 1st of the 4 Bs

Look for and explore browse list(s)

Characteristics:

• Often include an A-Z component, using single words/short phrases
• May point/link to broad, overview articles on a topic, containing cornerstone facts about that topic/subject

Examples:

Gale Subject Guide Index

Gale ‘Opposing Viewpoints’ Database

Gale ‘Health & Wellness Resource Center’ Database

Overview articles from a medical encyclopedia
Boxes: The 2nd of the 4 Bs

Look for a box to type in your search word or phrase from the homepage

• Look for a box to type in your search word or phrase from the homepage
• Look for an adjacent drop down list with parameters which can help refine search results
• Default search operator, if used, will almost always be an “and” – to narrow search results
• Search results: May be according to a ‘ranking’; Look for the ability to sort menu results

Characteristics:

To perform a basic search:

• Enter your search word or phrase in the box:

• If there is a drop down box adjacent to the box, Select the type of search you wish to run:
  - ex: by Basic Search (Keyword); Subject; Publication (source from which article was take);
  - Entire Document – or other ways that might be listed, such as by Title; Author

• Click on the Search button [for Gale databases = ] to perform the search
  Or, with cursor in box: just press Enter key to start the search

• Explore different order of menu results (ex: relevance; newest or oldest publication date)

• Rerun/refine search using different words and/or different limits/filters (see next slides)
**Basic Search Tools: The 3rd of the 4 Bs**

**Tip:** Look for and use available search tools to refine search results.

Although different databases use similar tools and symbols to aid in searching, review the button for details on how a particular database may use them.

**Characteristics:**

- **Purpose** of using search tools = To extract more relevant search results
- These tools commonly **narrow or broaden search results**
- **Types of search tools:**
  - look for and use *drop down lists*; other limit/filter lists on a menu results screen
  - look for and use a *search box found on the menu results screen* to “search within” results
  - use commonly known *search symbols* to refine relevant search results

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**To narrow/limit search results:**

Always: Limit search by **Full Text**

Explore: Limit results by Content Type/Format (ex: journals)

Use “**” around a word phrase in search box:

ex: “sleep apnea” = retrieves articles containing both words occurring in that order, side by side

Use > one word in search box:

ex: *diabetes metformin* = retrieves articles containing both words in each article [AND is usually implied]

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**To broaden search results:**

Use truncation symbol (*) placed after root word to broaden relevant search results:

ex: *child* = retrieves articles containing these terms: child &/or childhood &/or children

See the **Advanced Search tutorial** on how to use Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT)
Look for and use bridges to full text = citations

After running a basic search, the search engine will retrieve the results and display them on a menu results screen. This menu results screen will contain data with a hypertext link that acts as a bridge or link to the full text of articles, etc.

What is a Citation?

- a short multi-part description of an information source/work (source/work exs: book, journal article, website, video)
- used to give credit to the author(s) who have created the work
- provides the information that is needed to find the cited source
Basic Searching:
Common Features Found in Library Databases

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