



Searching InfoTrac: A Step-by-Step Guide

1. Do you want to search multiple databases at once?

Yes.

Note: some titles (Global Issues in Context, GREENR, Literature Resource Center) are not cross-searchable so you'll need to search them separately.

- A. Click on "Continue" button
- B. Choose Subject Guide Search (top menu bar)

No.

Click on the database that you want to search.

Is it an "In Context" database?

Yes.

Browse through the list of topics provided and review the articles (**Step 4**), or try an **Advanced Search (skip to Step 3)**.

Hint: Try a Subject Guide Search in another database first, to figure out what *subjects* and *keywords* to use.

No.

**Go to Step 2.
Subject Guide Search**

2. Subject Guide Search

Type your topic in a word (or phrase). Scan the list of **subjects** that you are given (the blue links).

How many results do you get?

Too many (more than a few hundred).

You can **NARROW** your results by clicking on the green + to see "**subdivisions**" - these take the main **subject** and break it down into **sub-topics**.

Click on the **subdivisions** (blue links) to look through your **Results List (Step 4)**.

Just the right number (100 - 250)

Click on the **subject** (blue link) to look through your results list.

Skip ahead to Results List (Step 4).

Not enough (less than 100).

You can **BROADEN** your results by clicking on "**related subjects**" which will give you a list of the subjects related to your topic.

Click on the **subjects** (blue links) to look through your **Results List (Step 4)**.
*To combine into one list, do an **Advanced Search (Step 3)**.*

3. Advanced Searches

Once you have figured out your Subjects (see Step 2) and/or keywords (other words that describe aspects of your topic—you can combine them into an advanced search, using **Boolean search operators** and **truncation** (see Glossary, page 4; **also see the Library’s Research Skills web page for detailed instruction on Boolean searching**).

A. Click on “Continue” button

B. Use Boolean drop-downs

Subject = [type your subject heading that you confirmed]

AND/OR/NOT

Keyword/Subject = [type the word or phrase to help narrow]

Note: Each search box is a single idea where you can also enter your own Boolean terms (e.g. youth OR teen)*

Hint: it’s sometimes easier to do these advanced searches with the “Search Assist” OFF.

4. Reviewing Your Results List

Your results will be grouped into **types** of resources—books/reference, magazine articles, newspaper articles, academic journal articles etc—in the lefthand navigation menu.

A. Click on type of resource you want (blue link).

B. Do you have enough relevant articles to choose?

Too many.

Skip ahead to Limiting/Refining Your Results (Step 5).

Just the right number.

Skip ahead to Saving Your Results (Step 6).

Not enough.

Skip ahead to Saving Your Results (Step 6) and then try another search to find more. **Note the “Related Subjects” list for ideas of other subject guide searches you can try.**

5. Limiting/Refining Your Results

If you still have too many articles in your list, you can refine your results by **searching *within* your results** (search box, top left).

- A. Below the search box on the left, it should have defaulted to “only full text”.
- B. Click “peer reviewed” if you are looking for highly academic information.
- C. Enter additional keywords that could narrow your search (e.g. Canad* if you’re looking for Canadian information)



6. Saving Your Results

When you find an article you’d like to use:

- A. Copy and paste the Source Citation (bottom of the article) into your Works Cited.
*Note: default is MLA—to get APA, click on **Citation Tools** in the top right-hand corner, switch to APA, and then click Save.*
- B. In the Tools box (top right of the screen), either **email** the article to yourself, or **download** it (to your G: drive or a memory stick). Do NOT bookmark the URL at the top of the page!



7. Repeat as Necessary

Searching can be a bit like a scavenger hunt or a “choose your own adventure” book. Be patient, follow the different paths, keep track of what you’ve tried, and collect articles as you go (see Step 6)...once you have a pile of research, then read through the articles in more detail.

Remember to choose a variety of *types* of resources—magazine articles, academic journal articles, reference books.

Glossary (terms to know)

Abstract - the description/mini summary of the article

Boolean - the operators (AND, OR, NOT) that you put between your terms (subjects or keywords) to NARROW (fewer results) or BROADEN (more results) your search. AND = both OR = either NOT = first term but not the second
See the Library's Research Skills web page for detailed instruction on Boolean searching.

Citation - just the title/author/publication information of an article (just like what you're put in your Works Cited)

Full text search - searches the full article for the terms entered

Keyword search - searches the an article's **citation** and **abstract** for the terms entered

Subdivisions - sub-topics of a main subject e.g. subject = self esteem + subdivision = psychological aspects
==> just the articles dealing with the psychological aspects of self esteem

Subject - the specific list of topics that librarians use to index articles. When they get an article, they choose from this list of subjects (subject headings) and "tag" the article with this subject

Truncation - the way to search for multiple forms of a word. Use the asterisk (*) at the point where the word starts to vary
e.g. teen* will search for teen, teens, teenager, teenagers