Helpful Searching Guides

Now that you have planned your search strategy and have chosen the best tool to suit your needs, you can begin searching!

Step by Step guide to Subject Searching:

1. Wait!
   - Before you begin searching, it is a good idea to familiarize yourself with the search tool.
     - Online search tools or databases somewhat vary in the way they look and operate.
     - Most offer similar searching capabilities, but it is useful to look through the help and thesaurus guides at the top of the database page to learn how to enter your search strategy.

2. Now you can Start Searching
   - Once you have familiarized yourself with the tool, begin your search with your search strategy
     - Try basic searches to build your confidence, and then when you feel comfortable try the advanced search features on the database.
     - The advanced searching options can be more challenging but allow you to narrow your search such as: books and articles aimed at a particular audience.
3. Make Small but Helpful Changes

- You are searching for material on a given subject, so begin your search with a **keyword search**, rather than a **subject terms** search.
  
  - A **keyword search** will search every part of a record for your search terms,
  
  - Whereas a **subject term** will only search the subject field(s) of the record.
  
  - If you do not know the exact wording of the subject being used you may not retrieve any results, and some databases allow you to browse the subject index to find out what terms are used.

- **Tip:** Some databases like Academic Search Premier, it is easier to use the Advanced Search rather then the Basic Search because you can select **subject terms** from a drop-down menu.
  
  - You also have the option to enter your search terms into multiple boxes and select search modifiers from a drop-down menu.

**Example:**

![Image of Advanced Search interface]

- Enter search terms: "Elderly Population" AND "Mental Health"
- Use the drop-down menu to select subject terms from the list.
4. Now you have Results!

1. When the database returns the results of your search, you should:
   - Look at the number of results retrieved.
   - If there are too many, revise your search by adding terms. If too few, broaden your search by removing terms.
   - Examine each article in the results list to determine if the item is helpful to your topic.
   - If you find an item that matches what you are looking for, note the subject headings or the words in blue text when you select an article which are used to describe the information. The subject headings can used to complete a subject search for items that deal with the same subject.

Example:

**Assisted Living Facility Administrator and Direct Care Staff Views of Resident Mental Health Concerns and Staff Training Needs.**

Authors: Dakin, Emily1
Quinlan, Louise M.1
McMillan, Courtney2


*Document Type:* Article

*Subject Terms:*
- Congregate housing
- Elder care
- Mental health of older people
- Long-term care of older people
- Social work with older people
- Gerontology
- Adult care facilities
- Long-term care facilities
- Mentally ill older people
- Mental health personnel
- Nursing home employees
- Health facility employee training
Step by Step Guide to Searching for Specific Authors:

1. If you want to find a book, article, or materials written by a particular author use the **author or title search** fields in the search feature.
   - When doing a title search, you can usually leave off any leading articles in a title (such as A, AN, or THE).
     - **For Example:** to search for Shakespeare's play *The Tempest*, you would just enter **Tempest** in the search box.
   - To do an author search, you usually will enter your search terms in this order: last name, first name.
     - **For Example:** to find books by William Shakespeare enter **Shakespeare, William** in the search box on the author search screen.

**Example:**

![Image of search interface](image)

**Tip:** Notice that you can Choose Databases by Subject, so when this is selected you are able to select multiple databases to search for your specific topic. In this example, the only database selected is eBooks to find Shakespeare’s plays.