GETTING STARTED

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

What kind of information do I need?
Current? Historical? Something in between? Scholarly? Primary source?

What kind of form might the information come in?
Book? Scholarly article? Popular article, e.g., a newspaper or magazine? Podcast? Blogpost?

Where should I look and how can I get to it?
Online? Which database? The catalogue? In the stacks? Which library? Do I have to pay?

How can I get to it? | What do my search results mean? | How relevant is what I am finding?

GETTING HELP: Ask a librarian for assistance to help figure out what you need, and how to get to it.
The intention of this guide is to help students answer some of the above questions.

1. UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD OF ACADEMIC RESOURCES

Knowing how things work, how information is structured and organized, helps you navigate this world with more confidence and ease

Every area of study, and every profession has its own literature – books, journals, and more. This literature can be scholarly in nature, or meant for the general public. Some of it may be freely available on the web (open access) – for example, the fulltext articles found by Google Scholar, but most of it is not free.

Most electronic resources – e-books, e-journals, fulltext journal articles – available to you from the UTL website are paid for and made available to the university’s students through the university library.

So, you should NOT look for this material on the public web, but only from the UTL website.

GETTING HELP: Ask a librarian for assistance in navigating the U of T Library’s website

2. DECIPHERING A CITATION

You need to be able to tell what kind of thing you are looking by figuring it out from its citation. That is, you need to know WHAT you are looking for, in order to know WHERE to find it.

Is the citation to a book? An essay in a book? A scholarly journal article? A magazine article?

If you are looking for a book, you need to look in the LIBRARY CATALOGUE

If you are looking for a journal article, use ARTICLE SEARCH. You won't find articles in a library catalogue!

GETTING HELP: See Basic elements of citations – http://libguides.gatech.edu/c.php?g=53980&p=348445
GETTING TO BOOKS, JOURNALS & JOURNAL ARTICLES FROM THE U OF T LIBRARIES WEBSITE — http://onesearch.library.utoronto.ca

LIBRARY HOMEPAGE START-YOUR-SEARCH
A mega-search that searches the following **ALL AT ONCE:**
- UTL catalogue, with its millions of books & journals
- Over 1200 licensed article databases in all areas of study
- UTL collection of hundreds of Research Guides (aka LibGuides)
- The UTL website, which includes things like the UTL staff directory, and the UTL FAQ collection

While this kind of search is great for a quick view of what exists, it is not an efficient way to search.

To be an efficient searcher, look in the right container for what you want e.g. books in the CATALOGUE, articles in ARTICLE DATABASES, newspapers in NEWSPAPER DATABASES, etc.

ONLINE & PAPER **BOOKS**—CATALOGUE SEARCH

ONLINE & PAPER **JOURNALS**—CATALOGUE SEARCH

JOURNAL **ARTICLES**

- ARTICLES SEARCH
  Find known articles, or articles on a topic from over 1200 databases searched all at once. This is the Summon search. You’ll get huge #s of results when searching for articles on a topic with this search

- DATABASE SEARCH
  Find articles in databases, either huge interdisciplinary databases like Web of Science, or Scopus, or in hundreds of different specialized subject databases such as Communications Abstracts or Worldwide Political Science Abstracts

SOME TIPS

- Don’t use the catalogue to look for articles. The catalogue DOES NOT CONTAIN ARTICLES. It only tells you about books and journals, **not about the articles contained in journals**.

- When searching for items by title, use double quotes (” ”) around the title to search the words together

- If you don’t get any results, check your spelling!

- Searching for articles on a topic takes time. Don’t leave it to the last minute.

- Ask for help. **No question too stupid.** Really. Let us (the Inforum staff) help you save your time.
GETTING TO ARTICLE DATABASES FROM THE UTL WEBSITE

Subject-specific databases are grouped by categories in Subjects A–Z

Interdisciplinary databases are listed in POPULAR DATABASES

- A short list of popular databases, including popular Ebsco and Proquest subject databases
- Also lists important interdisciplinary databases such as JSTOR and Project Muse

### POPULAR DATABASES

- EBSCO (Interdisciplinary)
  - ATLA Religion Database
  - Business Source Premier
  - Historical Abstracts
  - Humanities Index
  - RBM Abstracts of Music Literature
  - View of EBSCO databases

- Engineering Village (Interdisciplinary)
  - Computer Engineering
  - View all Engineering Village databases

- Factiva (Business and current events)

- Google Scholar (Interdisciplinary)

- JSTOR (Interdisciplinary)

- OVID (Interdisciplinary)
  - Medicine
  - Embase Medicine
  - PsychINFO
  - Social Work Abstracts
  - View all OVID databases

- Project Muse (Interdisciplinary)

- ProQuest (Interdisciplinary)

### SUBJECTS A–Z

- A list of hundreds of databases organized by subject area
- The list also includes databases covering special formats e.g. DISSERTATIONS, ENCYCLOPEDIAS, NEWSPAPERS

#### Find databases by subject:
- Choose a subject -
  - Go

- Aerospace
  - Article databases

- African Studies
  - Article databases
  - Dictionaries & Encyclopedias
  - Primary sources

- Anthropology
  - Article databases
  - Dictionaries & Encyclopedias
  - Primary sources

- Archaeology
  - Article databases
  - Dictionaries & Encyclopedias
  - Primary sources

- Architecture
MORE ABOUT ARTICLE SEARCH

- U of T libraries buys access to databases in all subject areas: History, Medicine, Political Science, Chemistry, Literature, Business & Management, Art, Social Sciences — all the areas you can see listed in the SUBJECTS A-Z listing on the library homepage

- Using the ARTICLE SEARCH looks into all these databases at once. This is called the Summon search.

FINDING A KNOWN ARTICLE

Using ARTICLE SEARCH is the best way to find a known article, as in the in-class practice example:

“Student resistance movements in higher education: An analysis of the depiction of Black Lives Matter student protests in news media”

You don’t even have to know which journal the article is from, or the year, or volume, or issue but, be aware that not all articles found in the ARTICLE search may be available as fulltext.

CAN’T FIND THE ARTICLE?

If you can’t find the article, find out which journal the article is from, then look for that journal in the LIBRARY CATALOGUE. Pick the online version of the journal – it will say [electronic resource] after the title. Click on the links to find the right year of your journal.

EXAMPLE: We get the online journal Information Society from many different electronic providers.

FINDING ARTICLES ON A TOPIC

However, when you use ARTICLE SEARCH to look for articles on a topic, you get huge numbers of hits because you are searching hundreds of databases, each of which contains thousands or millions of articles.

Add more contextual words to your search, OR find some databases in your topic area by using the SUBJECTS A-Z listing, and search those instead.
ABOUT SCHOLARLY JOURNALS & PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES

Characteristics of scholarly journals
- Content written by academics, for a scholarly audience
- Assumes that reader is familiar with concepts and terminology in the field.
- Often contain presentation of original research: usually organized in a standard structure —abstract, intro, literature review, research methodology, findings, and results discussion
- Articles are usually lengthy, and often include charts & graphs of data (not photos)
- Always contains footnotes and/or list of references cited
- Peer-reviewed, for the most part

Where do scholarly journals come from?
Associations & other professional organizations; university presses; commercial publishers.

What does ‘scholarly journal’ mean?
- A publication that is authored by academics for a target audience that is mainly academic and that is published by a recognized society with academic goals and missions
- A journal may be scholarly, but not peer-reviewed.

What does ‘peer-reviewed’ (or refereed) mean?
- A publication in which articles go through an official editorial process that involves review and approval by the author’s peers (experts in the same subject area)
- Think of it as a type of scholarly quality-control mechanism. With peer-reviewed journals, articles are read and critiqued by experts in the same field, before being accepted for publication.

How can you tell if an article is from a peer-reviewed (a.k.a refereed) journal?

1. Check in Ulrichswap, the online version of Ulrich’s Periodical Directory: Covers 300,000 journals worldwide, from 90,000 publishers, in 950 subject areas. Look up the journal title in Ulrichswap, then check for this symbol which means ‘refereed’. Find Ulrichswap in the catalogue as shown below.
2. Some journal repositories, e.g. Scholars Portals journals, will say so in the journal information.
3. Limit to ONLY peer-reviewed articles when you search. Many databases have this feature.
4. Look up the journal’s website to see if it says ‘peer-reviewed’ in the journal’s description.

Catalogue record for Ulrichweb: http://go.utlib.ca/cat/11688043

Click on the LINK in the catalogue record to get into Ulrichswap. Use advanced search mode to look for journal title.
**USING THE INTERNET FOR RESEARCH**

How can you tell if the information you find on the internet (that is, the public web, not the licensed e-resources that you access from the University of Toronto Libraries from its website) is valid or not? Could it be fake news? Here are some resources to help you evaluate the authenticity of what you find.

*How to spot fake news*
https://onesearch.library.utoronto.ca/faq/how-do-i-spot-fake-news

*Snopes.com*
http://snopes.com

A fact-checking website, and a provider of information about misinformation. As they say, "We are the internet’s go-to source for discerning what is true and what is total nonsense."

*Research using the internet*
https://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/researching/research-using-internet/

This helpsheet from the University of Toronto Writing Centre lists questions (2nd half of the document) to ask yourself in order to thoroughly evaluate the information. The questions relate to:

- Authority
- Affiliation
- Audience level
- Currency
- Content reliability/accuracy

**PRIMARY & SECONDARY SOURCES**

You may be asked to use primary sources in an assignment.

This research guide explains the difference between primary sources (e.g., diaries, eye-witness accounts, research data, tweets, oral histories, records) and secondary sources. It also gives in-depth information about how to access primary source collections at U of T Libraries, in both paper and online format. Evaluation criteria for primary sources are included, along with a section on maps and data as primary sources.

*Infographic on primary vs. secondary sources*
https://library.trocaire.edu/services/studentservices/researchassistance/primarysecondarigraphic/

*Finding primary sources*
https://guides.library.utoronto.ca/utsc primariesources
GETTING HELP WITH WRITING, CITING, & RESEARCH

GETTING WRITING HELP

Writing clearly & concisely (Inforum online tutorial)
https://inforum.library.utoronto.ca/workshops/writing-clearly-and-concisely-2

Writing a thesis statement (Inforum online tutorial)

Writing advice from U of T
https://advice.writing.utoronto.ca
This site offers a wealth of information from the U of T Writing Centre. Scroll over the horizontal tabs to drop down menus with how-to-do-it tips for many kinds of academic writing, as well as grammar advice, how to take notes, and much, much more. Check it out if you need any kind of writing help at all.

Online Writing Lab (OWL, Purdue University) academic writing help section
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/index.html
The Online Writing Lab (OWL) is famous for the sheer breadth and depth of academic writing advice. Similar to the U of T Writing Centre, but much larger in scope. An invaluable source for students!

GETTING CITING HELP

Citing sources guide
https://guides.library.utoronto.ca/citing

https://inforum.library.utoronto.ca/research.guides#citation

Citation help from the Online Writing Lab (OWL) at Purdue University
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html

Plagiarism guide
https://guides.library.utoronto.ca/plagiarism

Citation management software guide
http://guides.library.utoronto.ca/citationmanagement
Includes a very helpful comparison chart.

Chicago manual of style (17th ed.):
Available online via from UTL at http://go.utlib.ca/cat/11331900
GETTING RESEARCH HELP

The Inforum librarians, especially Nalini, the reference librarian would be happy to help, whether you have a quick question, or you would like to make an appointment with her for a research consultation – nalini.singh@utoronto.ca. In addition, the U of T libraries has many kinds of research help, including a wide variety of research guides in many areas of study.

RESEARCH GUIDES

The following guides are excellent starting points in their areas. Created by librarians at U of T libraries, they are meant to provide students and other researchers with key resources and time-saving information. U of T Libraries offers many other research guides in all kinds of disciplines, e.g., history, law, political science, art. Explore at https://onesearch.library.utoronto.ca/research-guides!

**Essential research skills guide** (and writing too)!
https://guides.library.utoronto.ca/Essential

Ignore the fact that this guide is linked to a set of UTL workshops. The content will help you with important skills like: how to get started with the research process, how to think about your topic, how to evaluate your sources, especial web sources.

**Citing sources / Creating your own bibliography research guide**
https://guides.library.utoronto.ca/citing

All kinds of helpful info on why to cite, how to cite in different styles, e.g., APA, MLA, etc.

**Critical Information Policy Studies research guide**
https://guides.library.utoronto.ca/cips2

Lists journals in this area of study, suggested article databases to use, important organizations and associations that cover privacy, surveillance, internet and social media, information and communication technology (ICTs). Also incl. subject headings to help you find books on topics in the library catalogue.

**Newspapers research guide**
https://guides.library.utoronto.ca/newspapers

Points you to the various ways places where you can get to all kinds of newspapers that the U of T library subscribes to in online form. The newspaper articles that you find will be fulltext. If you search for newspaper articles on the public web, you will have to pay for most content. Don’t! Use this guide instead.

**Canadian government information research guide**
https://guides.library.utoronto.ca/c.php?q=702478&p=4993298

**Understanding peer review**
https://guides.library.utoronto.ca/peer-review