

Using Online Databases

www.alamo.edu/nlc/library

NLC LRC offers access to several dozen online databases which contain academic/peer reviewed journals that are either indexed or fulltext. Use the database searching features to narrow search results down if you're getting large numbers. Many of the databases are discipline based so be sure to select the databases that are most appropriate for your field of interest.

GETTING STARTED USING ONLINE DATABASES

All NLC LRC databases are linked off the library's home page. Go to <http://www.alamo.edu/nlc/library/>. Click on **ELECTRONIC DATABASES** or go to http://www.alamo.edu/nlc/library/t_Electronic%20Databases.htm.

General and broad discipline databases are listed first. You can also select databases arranged by discipline. Click on the discipline in which you are interested. Some databases like [ACADEMIC SEARCH COMPLETE](#) and the [NEWSPAPER](#) databases are broad discipline or general in topic content.

***TIP** In your search results, if you get a citation to an article that isn't fulltext, look in A to Z Online Journal Locator. The article may be fulltext in another database.

<https://proxy.nlc.alamo.edu:4443/login?url=http://atoz.ebsco.com/Search.asp?id=8525>

SEARCHING TIPS

- 1) Most of the time, you will want to use the **ADVANCED SEARCH** feature if a database offers one.
- 2) **FIELD SEARCHING** is the most efficient method in narrowing down your search by topic. The most commonly used field code is **SUBJECT**. You can also narrow a search by **AUTHOR, JOURNAL TITLE, ARTICLE TITLE, GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION, PERSON, etc.**

Each database supplies its own field designators. Use drop down menus or field codes to specific which field you want searched.

- 3) **BOOLEAN CONNECTORS** are another important search method and should be used when searching complex/compound search concepts. The three **BOOLEAN CONNECTORS** are **AND, OR, NOT**.

AND – narrows search down to include ALL indicated terms

Depression AND Adolescence

OR – broadens search out to include ANY indicated term

Bipolar Disorder OR Manic Depression

NOT – narrows search down by eliminating indicated term

Affective Disorders NOT adolescence

You may have to “nest” your terms when using BOOLEAN connectors. This just means to group your terms together as you want them searched. In other words, tell the database to search NOTs and ORs before it searches ANDs

4) **TRUNCATION & WILDCARD SYMBOLS** allow users to indicate that they want a partial word or alternate spellings of words found.

Most databases explain what they use for these symbols by using their ONLINE HELP screens. EBSCOHost and GALE databases use these symbols.

? is the wildcard and is used to replace letters – wom?n

* is the truncation symbol and finds variant endings of words – politic*

5) **PROXIMITY SYMBOLS** allow the user to specify the “closeness” of words to each other within a search result. EBSCOHost and GALE databases use the proximity indicators listed below.

N# will find two words in any order within the specified number of words of each other. For example: *variable* n15 control**

W# will find any two words in the order in which they were entered and within the number indicated. For example: *mean w15 median*

REFINING YOUR SEARCH

Once you have your search narrowed down by topic, field, and Boolean, you can specify that you are only interested in certain types of publications, dates, fulltext, peer reviewed or academic publications, etc.

In EBSCOHost databases, look for the REFINE SEARCH tab.

In GALE databases, options are available on the ADVANCED Search screen.

*TIP Remember that websites are not the same thing as licensed databases.