Information & Research Skills:

How to Research Your Assignment

UG Classics

www.rhul.ac.uk/library
Aims of the Session

One of the keys to successful study is the ability to identify and exploit the resources available in our library and online. This course will explore:

- How to plan a literature search
- How to use LibrarySearch to find information from a range of sources
- How to identify databases specific to your subject
- Accessing electronic resources off-campus
- How to identify other libraries available to you through the Sconul Access Scheme

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1. Introduction to the Information Research Process

Finding high quality information will help you to produce a good assignment. Efficient information handling skills will enable you to produce better coursework, give you more confidence when researching projects and impress your tutor!

Finding information can be daunting; you must be aware of the key information resources available to you and learn how to use them effectively. The aim is for you to spend more time working on your assignment and less time searching up blind alleys.

Using internet search engines is perfect for hobbies and interests. However, Google is not the best place to find information to support academic work. General search engines do not exert any quality control over the results they give you. Remember: anyone can publish anything on the web. There is a lot of sub-standard material out there as you have no doubt discovered.

Your tutors expect you to use high quality information sources i.e. material written by authoritative named individuals or responsible organisations. We are not ruling out the use of Google – but simply saying there may be better places for you to look.

2. Planning a Literature Search

You should carry out your search in a logical sequence. To get the best results, follow the step by step instructions below.

Step 1: Textbooks and Reference Works

Why use reference sources?

To give you a basic overview and grasp of a topic and to familiarise yourself with its structure and terminology. Even in the electronic age, print resources such as the high quality textbooks which you will find in the libraries provide ideal background material for your coursework.

Your reading list will give you references to books which may help you with your assignment. You may find that you need to read material that is not on your reading list, either because the books listed are out on loan to other students, or because you want to read more widely on your area of interest. Use LibrarySearch to find additional titles. All textbooks and reference books have detailed contents pages and indexes. Use these to find the information that you need. Information in textbooks and reference books will provide an overview, ensuring that you understand the structure and terminology of your topic before you search for journal literature. You may also want to consult a dictionary for basic definitions.
Step 2: Finding Journal Articles

Why should I use journal articles?

Answer  Journals are key sources of information. Original research will be published in journals long before the content appears in book form. Also, “review articles” will provide you with an overview.

There are two approaches to finding journal articles on your topic:

- Using LibrarySearch
- Searching bibliographic databases

LibrarySearch

Use LibrarySearch to produce a list of journal articles relevant to your subject. LibrarySearch streamlines your research process by enabling you to search across many of our electronic resources and the library catalogue, all from one search box. So you can use LibrarySearch, to quickly and easily search for print and electronic books, electronic journal articles, newspapers, theses, media and more.

E-resources (online resources / databases)

If you can’t find what you need in LibrarySearch try searching an e-resource. The library has many different online resources. Some databases focus on a subject, like history. Some have research from particular countries. Some have historic information and some just have current research. A successful database search will produce a list of journal articles relevant to your subject. In many cases there will be a direct link to the full text but some records will simply give you an abstract (summary) and details of which journal, year and volume you need to check. Some databases show other types of publications like newspaper articles or images. You’ve just got to find the right database for your topic. To see which databases are most relevant to your subject have a look at the ‘Subject Guides’ pages on the library website

http://libguides.rhul.ac.uk/History

You can improve your chances of finding the information you need if you think about the best keywords and search terms to use before starting your search.

This is known as developing a ‘search strategy’
2.1 Planning a Search Strategy

**Analysing the questions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What exactly is the topic you are searching for?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Example:</strong> Barbarian Females and Female Barbarians in Greek Tragedy</td>
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</table>

Look carefully at your essay title, and identify the key areas on which your essay will focus. First, try to pick out the keywords in your title and make a note of them.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>What are the main concepts or keywords for your topic?</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Example:</strong> Barbarian – behavioural / Barbarian – demographic, geographic / females / Greek Tragedy (specific authors?)</td>
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Establishing the keywords means that you can ignore words which don't add to the meaning of your topic, for example words like discuss, what or in.

Once you have identified your keywords think of alternative words that describe each of these concepts. Think of synonyms, acronyms, abbreviations, plurals and related terms. Use reference works to check for alternative terms and to check the relationship between different terms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are there any similar words that describe each of these concepts?</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Example:</strong> foreign(er) (other countries, races or cultures) / inferior, uncultured, violent, cruel / plays, theatre, literature</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

You can combine keywords together using “operators” or linking words. The most common are AND and OR.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How might you combine these keywords together to search?</th>
<th>Example:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>barbarian AND female</td>
<td>would return results containing both the words (i.e. it narrows the search results)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female OR women</td>
<td>would return results containing either ‘imagery’ or ‘symbols’ (i.e. it widens the search results)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use these keywords to search for books, journals and other material using **LibrarySearch**

http://librarysearch.rhul.ac.uk/
2.2 Using LibrarySearch to Find Books and E-books

You can search LibrarySearch at [http://librarysearch.rhul.ac.uk/](http://librarysearch.rhul.ac.uk/)

You can also search LibrarySearch from the library homepage

Use the search box for your initial search and then refine your results using the options on the results page.

**Searching for a print book**

- Type your keywords into the search box, e.g. *Greek tragedy*
- Limit your results to library items by selecting the *Books, Music & Films* tab
- Limit your results to print books only by selecting *Available in RHUL Library* in the *Show only* box
- Click on the title to view full holdings information

**Searching for an e-book**

Electronic books (e-books) are digital versions of printed books, which can be accessed online. The library has a growing e-book collection which includes popular course reading and reference works such as dictionaries and encyclopaedias.

- Select the *ALL* tab
- Type your keywords into the search box, e.g. *Greek tragedy*
- Limit your results to e-books by selecting *Full text online* (and refine to *books* if showing)
- Click on *view online* to link to the e-book

- You may be prompted to login with your Royal Holloway login and password

2.3 Using LibrarySearch to Find Journal Articles

The following example shows you how to find journal articles in LibrarySearch on a specific topic

- Type your keywords into the search box, e.g. *barbarians AND female AND Greek*
- Limit your results to *Full text online* and *peer-reviewed articles*
- Click on the title to view the article summary.
Click on View Online to check for access to the full text.

You can search for other publications by an author by clicking on the Author's name.

Select e-Shelf to save an item.

Click on My Account to view the items in your favourites. You can then email your references to yourself, print a list of your saved references or export them to reference management software such as RefWorks.

Exercise 1 (2 – 3 mins): Keyword selection.

Think about the topic provided in the presentation. With the person next to you, discuss which keywords from the topic you would use in a search. Also, are there any alternative search terms that you could use to find information on this topic. List them in the box below.

Keywords:
**Exercise 2: Use LibrarySearch to find information on the topic using your chosen keywords**

1) Write down the search terms you used and how many results you found?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Search Terms</th>
<th>No. of results</th>
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2) Limit your search to journal articles published in the last 5 years, how many results did you find?

See if you can limit your search to articles which have the full text only

3) Write down details (author, articles title, source, date) of two useful/relevant articles you have found and whether or not the full text is available?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full text available? Yes / No</th>
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4) Save the two useful articles and email them to yourself
2.4 Finding E-resources Specific to Your Subject

If you are unable to find the information you need in LibrarySearch you may want to try searching one of the subject-specific e-resources such as JSTOR. The library subscribes to a range of subject related and multidisciplinary databases from the UK and worldwide. As well as journal articles you can access a wide variety of information including primary sources, newspaper archives, sound and media recordings, images, historical documents and more. To find E-resources specific to your subject:

- Go to the library home page www.rhul.ac.uk/library
- Click on Subject Guides from the left-hand menu
- Or go direct to: http://libguides.rhul.ac.uk/

The databases are listed by name on the A-Z list or you click on your subject area and then the E-resource tab. The subject pages also list the e-resources by type. Each e-resource has a brief description.

Databases from different suppliers or publishers will have different interfaces but the functions offered will tend to be the same. Each database will normally offer help screens to enable you to familiarise yourself with the features of that particular database.
Example of a Classics online resource (database): L'Année philologique

Founded in Paris in 1926 by Jules Marouzeau, L’Année philologique has long been considered an indispensable resource by the research scholars who are its intended users. Its goal is to collect annually scholarly works relating to every aspect of Greek and Roman civilization (authors and texts; literature; linguistics; political, economic, and social history; attitudes and daily life; religion; cultural and artistic life; law; philosophy; science and technology; and the history of classical studies). Significant space is accorded to the auxiliary disciplines (archaeology, epigraphy, numismatics, papyrology and paleography). Book notices are followed by a listing of reviews as these are published. Every year, its contents are added to the on-line database.

3. Off Campus Access

There are two ways in which you can access online resources subscribed to by Royal Holloway Library while away from campus.

Royal Holloway Virtual Private Network Service (Campus Anywhere)

If you are on campus you will not need to log in to access most of our electronic resources. The only way to access all of our electronic resources off campus is to install the Virtual Private Network (VPN) service, also known as ‘CampusAnywhere’. The VPN Service sets up a secure connection between your computer at home and the College network. Using this connection you can access the library’s electronic journals and databases as well as other College services, such as your Y Drive, the College Intranet and other restricted websites. Your computer is given the appearance of being part of the Royal Holloway Campus network.

For details on how to set up the VPN connection go to the Computer Centre homepage at: http://www.rhul.ac.uk/it/home.aspx and follow the link: CampusAnywhere
Login with your College username and password
You can log into most of our e-resources with your College username and password. Search for the database or journal you wish to access and click on the link. You will be prompted to enter a username and password. Some resources will require you to login to Athens first and this will be indicated in the Access links information.

Further information on off-campus access can be found on the History Subject Guide on the E-resources tab.

4. Using Other Libraries

As a Royal Holloway student you are entitled to access other university libraries in the UK. We always recommend checking the relevant online catalogue before you visit and contacting the Library beforehand if you want to access a specific item.

You can join the SCONUL Access Scheme free of charge if you need to use another University library. All member libraries will permit you reference access, including reading and making photocopies of journal papers. Postgraduate and part-time students are also able to gain borrowing rights from many of the libraries participating in the scheme.

You can apply for SCONUL Access of a library via the SCONUL Access web site: http://www.access.sconul.ac.uk/

Senate House Library, the central University of London Library, is another important resource that enables Royal Holloway students and staff to be members and apply for a library card. As a member of Senate House Library you will be able to borrow material from the library and access electronic resources including e-journals and databases. Further information about membership can be found on their web site http://www.shl.lon.ac.uk/library/membership.shtml. You can register remotely, and gain a login to access their electronic resources, at http://www.rhul.ac.uk/library/otherlibraries/

5. Citation and referencing

When researching your subject it is vital that you maintain an accurate record from the start of any sources you may have consulted and cited in your work. This ensures ethical use of the work in:

- Acknowledging the original author
- Enabling the item to be traced by others
- Providing evidence of the scope and depth of your research.

You dissertation supervisor or departmental handbook can offer guidance on what citation style is required for the piece of work you are doing. Internet material needs to be referenced just the same as that derived from printed sources.
5.1 Managing your references using RefWorks

RefWorks is an online bibliographic management programme which enables you to capture, save and organise references into your own personal database. As a member of RHUL you can access it via Eresources A-Z list. It enables you to:

- Capture and save references generated from online databases
- Automatically generate a bibliography in your document
- Insert citations directly into your research (i.e. word document)
- Format your references in a wide range of citation styles

RefWorks includes a comprehensive set of online self-help tutorials, or you may wish to sign up for the one of the RefWorks sessions that the Library regularly runs.

For available training sessions, please see the Information Skills sessions under the ‘Training’ section on the Library subject page for History: http://libguides.rhul.ac.uk/History

6. Further help & Contact details

If you would like more help or guidance on any of the topics explored in this course at any time during your research, please contact the Library Information Consultant for Classics:

Russell Burke, Russell.Burke@rhul.ac.uk

or email: library@rhul.ac.uk

Further information can also be found on the Library website:

http://rhul.ac.uk/library/

And for information relating to Library Services for History:

http://libguides.rhul.ac.uk/Classics
Appendix I: Library Search Tutorials

Finding items on your reading list using LibrarySearch

LibrarySearch is available online and can be accessed from anywhere with an internet connection. You can access it from the library home page: [http://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/library](http://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/library)

2.1 Searching for a book

Scan this code to watch a video tutorial on searching for a book! Or go to this URL: [http://youtu.be/9xDpxO92bx8](http://youtu.be/9xDpxO92bx8)

2.2 Searching for an e-book

Electronic books (e-books) are digital versions of printed books, which can be accessed online. The library has a growing e-book collection which includes popular course reading and reference works such as dictionaries and encyclopedias.

Scan this code to watch a video tutorial on searching for an e-book! Or go to this URL: [http://youtu.be/z9gkSkPoUSg](http://youtu.be/z9gkSkPoUSg)
2.3 Searching for a journal

To find journals you have three options:

**Option 1 - E-journals A-Z** links to an alphabetical list of electronic journal titles (this won’t include journals held in print)

Scan this code to watch a video tutorial on using the E-journals A-Z!
Or go to this URL: [http://youtu.be/CX6RIA-ITrs](http://youtu.be/CX6RIA-ITrs)

**Option 2 - Journal Title search**: search for a journal by title in the main search box. On the LibrarySearch screen click the **Journals by Title** tab to only see Journals.

Scan this code to watch a video tutorial on using searching LibrarySearch by Journal Title!!
Or go to this URL: [http://youtu.be/cXG2q3rojpc](http://youtu.be/cXG2q3rojpc)

*Please note: Not all links will provide the full text of a specific article.* Your options will vary depending upon our subscription.

**Option 3 – Article Title Search**: search for a journal article by its title in the main search box.


- Click **All** to view all kinds of items.
- Use the limiters to **Show Only Peer-reviews Journals**
- Look for **Full Text Available**
- Click **View Online** and follow the link to the journal article page
1. **Narrow your search**. Use the search tabs to search either **All** collections (online, print, from databases, held in the library), **Books, Music and Film** collections (print, CD, or DVD only), or **Journals by Title** (print and online).

2. **Show only**. Limit your results to **Peer-reviewed Journals** in print or online, or articles with **Full Text Online**.

3. **Resource Type**. Limit your results by the type of item e.g. books, journals, dissertations, exam papers

4. **Subject**. Refine your search by subject terms.

5. **Date**. Select a date range to narrow to items published within that range.

6. Sort your results by **relevance**, newest or oldest publication date first, author, or title.

7. **Actions**. Save, email or export your results to reference manager software

8. **View Online**. Check for availability of full text.

9. **Details**. Shows further information on the item.

10. **Save to e-shelf**. Just click the star, which will save the result to your e-shelf (access top right of screen).

11. Check whether the book is in stock by looking under **Locations**.
Advanced Search

Use the advanced search to:

- Find journal articles by a specific author
- Search for journal or newspaper articles within a specific publication
- Find an article using incomplete information (e.g. you may not know the articles title but just know the author and the publication).
- Search for words just within the title of a journal article
- Specify the exact publication dates.