SMLLC Students

Information & Research Skills Training:

Advanced Research Skills for Dissertations

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

Aimed primarily at 2\textsuperscript{nd} / 3rd year undergraduates and taught Masters students preparing for their extended essays or dissertations, this session will enable you to:

- Plan your literature search
- Search databases specific to your subject
- Use advanced search techniques
- Save searches and create alerts
- Access resources from other libraries

Contents

1. Planning a literature search
   1.1. Identifying keywords

2. Developing a search strategy
   2.1. Identifying suitable resources
   2.2. Developing your search
   2.3. Truncation/wildcard searching
   2.4. Search operators
   2.5. Phrase searching
   2.6. Creating search statements
   2.7. Focusing a search by date, language or document type
   2.8. Saving your search results

3. Citing and referencing
   3.1. Managing your references using RefWorks

4. Off campus access

5. Using other libraries

6. Ethical dimensions of research - Copyright and Plagiarism

7. Further Help

Appendices: I, II & III
1. Planning Your Literature Search

Once you have decided on your dissertation project topic you will need to carry out a literature search. A literature search is a detailed and organised step by step search for all the material available on a topic. Effective literature searching requires a strategic approach.

1.1 Identifying Keywords

Before you begin searching, think about the words you need to use in your search. Spending five minutes at the start and being systematic and organized will save you having to re-run searches with words you’ve forgotten to use.

Step 1: Write our your search as a sentence

Here are example topics written out as a sentence:

In the French avant-garde films of the 1920s, everything we see, including the human being, is subservient to rhythm & movement.

Step 2: Identify the important words/concepts

Translate your sentence into keywords. As these databases will search for exactly what you type in, you need to consider the following:

- **synonyms** - these are different words with the same or similar meaning e.g. emigration and migration - not all words have these but if they do they should be included in your list of keywords
- **acronyms** - this is where your keywords can be condensed into a set of capital letters e.g. WWII is World War II - use both the full term and the acronym when searching
- **alternative spellings** - remember to try UK and US spellings for example organisation and organization
- **alternative and related terms**, e.g. actor, actress, performer and star
- **international terms**, e.g. film and motion picture
- **former terms** (i.e. non pc versions), e.g. mental illness and madness
- **changes of place name**
- **broader and narrower terms** - you must be sure your results will be pitched at the right level and broader terms can retrieve very general results while narrow terms may be too specific

Additionally, a lot of databases provide a thesaurus of keywords, which is used to classify the work held in the database. Use this helpful tool if possible, as it provides consistency when searching.

If you don’t do this you might not find the most relevant articles.
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.

The following example shows how our sentence has been broken down into keywords and grouped by concept. It shows how they relate to one another.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept 1</th>
<th>Concept 2</th>
<th>Concept 3</th>
<th>Concept 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>French avant-garde films</td>
<td>1920s</td>
<td>What we see on film</td>
<td>Rhythm and movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental films</td>
<td>Early 20th Century</td>
<td>Mise-en-scène</td>
<td>Pace and flow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art films</td>
<td>Pre-war</td>
<td>Represented on screen</td>
<td>Editing and structure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Step 3: Think about ways you could limit your search

You might find too many references on your topic, so think about ways you could limit your search. Most databases will also allow you to limit your search in these ways:

- **date** – do you only want items published after a certain date?
- **language** – do you only want references in English?
- **geography** – do you want information about a specific place or published in a particular country?
- **type of publication** – do you only want references to journal articles, books, or theses, for example. This might influence your choice of database.
Exercise 1: Think about your own research / dissertation topic and plan your search

Topic

_____________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________

Keywords and concepts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept 1</th>
<th>Concept 2</th>
<th>Concept 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AND</td>
<td></td>
<td>AND</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Limits

Dates

Language

Type of publication
2. Developing a Search Strategy

2.1 Identifying suitable resources

Once you have identified your keywords you then need to identify which tools and online resources would be best suited for your research and where to find these resources. The Library homepage [http://www.rhul.ac.uk/library](http://www.rhul.ac.uk/library) provides a good starting point for using all types of Library resources, as it provides a link to LibrarySearch, e-journals, databases and other online resources.

You should also use the Library Subject Guides as these provide information about subject specific library services and links to resources relevant to your area of research. To find the Subject Guide for your department / subject go to the Library homepage [www.rhul.ac.uk/library](http://www.rhul.ac.uk/library) then click on ‘Subject Guides’ on the left hand menu and select your department, or go direct to: [http://libguides.rhul.ac.uk/](http://libguides.rhul.ac.uk/)

**Exercise 2:** Spend 2-3 minutes noting down which resources or types of resources you think you would use to carry out your research
2.2 Developing your search

Once you have identified your resources you then need to develop a search strategy. This section describes some important methods you can use to search efficiently and effectively. Guidance is provided on:

- using symbols to search for alternative word endings and spellings
- combining your concepts in a search statement
- searching for phrases
- performing more specific searches

2.3 Truncation / wildcard searching

Use to: widen your search and ensure you don’t miss relevant records

Most databases will just search for exactly what you type in. Truncation and wildcard symbols enable you to overcome this limitation. These search techniques retrieve information on similar words by replacing part of the word with a symbol usually a * or ?.

- In truncation the end of the word is replaced. For example histor* will retrieve history, histories, historical, historiography and so on.
- In wildcard searching, single letters from inside the word are replaced with a symbol. For example wom?n will retrieve the terms woman and women.

Please note! Different databases use different symbols, so use the help option to check what is used.

2.4 Search operators

Use to: combine your search words and include synonyms

Search operators (sometimes referred to as Boolean operators) allow you to join terms together, widen a search or exclude terms from your search results. This means you can be more precise in locating your information.

NB – a small number of specialist search tools do not use this type of searching.

AND - narrows your search by combining words. The results found must contain all the words which you have joined by using AND.

OR - broadens your search to include resources which contain any or all of the terms connected by OR.

NOT - narrows your search by excluding a term. Beware! By using this operator you might exclude relevant records because you will lose those records which include both words.

Please note! Check the online help screens for details of the search operators recognised by the database you are searching; some use symbols instead of words, e.g. + or &.
2.5 Phrase searching

➢ Use to: make your search more specific

Phrase searching is a technique that narrows your search down by searching for an exact phrase or sentence. It is particularly useful when searching for a title or a quotation. Usually speech marks (quotation marks) are used to connect the words together.

For example “French New Wave” will find results which contain that exact phrase (ie with the words appearing next to each other). Some search tools may use (brackets) or 'single quote marks' rather than speech marks so check the online help.

2.6 Creating search statements

➢ Use to: combine multiple search words

On most databases you can type in a search statement, this involves combining your search words using search operators. When creating a search statement you must use brackets to ensure correct processing of the search.

- Words representing the same concept should be bracketed and linked with ‘OR’ e.g. (avant-garde OR experimental) / (films OR movies)
- Groups of bracketed terms can be linked with ‘AND’ or ‘NOT’.

For example:

(avant-garde OR experimental) AND (film* OR movie*) AND (French OR France) AND 1920s AND movement AND rhythm

2.7 Focusing a search by date, language or document type

There are many ways to focus your search and all search tools offer different ways of doing this. Check the help facilities if the options are not immediately obvious. Some of the ways of limiting your search are as follows:

- **Date** – select the most recent research or research from specific period
- **Language** – some eresources will offer results in languages other than English
- **Place** – are you looking at research carried out in or based on a specific location
- **Publication type** – online / print; peer-reviewed journal articles / pre-print open access articles; review articles / book reviews; books / book chapters; newspapers; primary sources etc
- **Age groups** – are there specific characteristics of the demographic that you are researching
Exercise 3: Go to your Subject Guide and select the MLA Bibliography and try out a few searches using your keywords and some of the search techniques above. If you get no or very few results, try JSTOR, and after that try LibrarySearch.

2.3 Saving your search results

You usually have the option to select specific records to keep by marking or tagging them. LibrarySearch & most e-resources will offer the following methods of saving your search results:

- **Email** records to yourself

- **Save** records to your PC or memory stick. Create your own account within certain databases to save your searches to re-run later or set up **alerts**

- **Print** out

- **Export** to bibliographic management software such as RefWorks or Endnote

- **RSS feeds** allow you to have journal tables of contents sent to a personal webpage or RSS reader (RSS feeds can be more convenient than e-mail alerts, such as those from Zetoc, as they often contain direct links to the full text of some articles)

- You can use alerting services such as **Zetoc Alerts** to receive regular e-mails to update you on new publications. [http://zetoc.mimas.ac.uk/](http://zetoc.mimas.ac.uk/)

3. Citing 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 research supervisor or departmental handbook can offer guidance on what citation style is required for the piece of work you are doing. Internet materials need to be referenced just the same as printed sources.

The Library Subject Guides provide information on the referencing styles used by your Department plus books and online resources that can help you with referencing:

[http://libguides.rhul.ac.uk/](http://libguides.rhul.ac.uk/)
3.1 Managing your references using RefWorks

RefWorks is an online bibliographic management program which enables you to capture, save and organise references into your own personal database. As a member of RHUL you can access it via the Library’s e-resources 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. http://libguides.rhul.ac.uk/training

4. Off Campus Access

Royal Holloway Virtual Private Network Service (Campus Anywhere)

The only way to access all of our electronic resources off-campus is to use the Virtual Private Network (VPN) service, also known as ‘CampusAnywhere’. The Campus Anywhere Service (Virtual Private Network / VPN) creates a connection between your computer / laptop at home and the College network. Whenever you use the Campus Anywhere connection, your computer is given the appearance of being part of the Royal Holloway Campus 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.

For details on how to set up the Campus Anywhere service, go to the Computer Centre homepage at: https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/it/home.aspx and follow the link: CampusAnywhere (VPN)

If you have any difficulties with the setting-up CampusAnywhere, please phone the IT Service Desk who can help: 01784 414321. Alternatively, you can see the laptop support service, located in Bedford Library (room 2-01).
5. 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.

5.1 Senate House Library

Senate House Library, the central University of London Library, is an 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 website: [http://senatehouselibrary.ac.uk/membership/](http://senatehouselibrary.ac.uk/membership/)

**SHL resources:** if you only want to access their electronic resources you can do this by registering online at:

[https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/library/usingourlibraries/otherlibraries/senatehouselibrary.aspx](https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/library/usingourlibraries/otherlibraries/senatehouselibrary.aspx)

You can find out more about Senate House Library services for Royal Holloway students via the History Library Subject Guide.

5.2 The SCONUL Access Scheme

This is the first port of call if you need to use another university library and Royal Holloway participates in this scheme. You will be able to gain reference access to most of the libraries participating in the scheme, and part-time students and postgraduates can also gain borrowing rights to a number of the participating libraries. Further information about the scheme and a link to make your online application can be found at

[https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/library/usingourlibraries/otherlibraries/sconulaccess.aspx](https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/library/usingourlibraries/otherlibraries/sconulaccess.aspx)

5.3 Inter-Library Loans

One alternative resource if the library does not have what you are looking for is the Inter-library Loan service. This service is available to members of College, though students are required to obtain permission from their tutor/supervisor. Our main supplier is the British Library Document Supply Centre; if it is unable to supply, we then apply to other libraries. For more information on how to apply for an ILL, please go to:

[https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/library/usingourlibraries/interlibraryloans.aspx](https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/library/usingourlibraries/interlibraryloans.aspx)
6. Ethical dimensions of research

6.1 Copyright

Copyright affects everyone who is reproducing material from published or unpublished material for any reason. You therefore need to be aware of the limits on what you can photocopy, scan, include in your research, and print out from PC etc. The Library has produced some basic guidance on copyright, available at:

https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/library/teachingsupport/copyrightadvice.aspx

6.2 Plagiarism

The College has policies and procedures in place for addressing issues of plagiarism. More information is available at:

http://www.rhul.ac.uk/forstudents/studyresources/home.aspx

If you have questions about referencing, citing and bibliographies or you have any concerns about avoiding plagiarism, there are a number of handbooks and guides available from the library. These are listed under Citing and Referencing section of the Library Subject Guides:

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

The library also offers free training sessions on referencing, citing and bibliographies, which you can sign up for.

7. Further help

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 Modern Languages:

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 SMLLC, see the Modern Languages Subject Guide:

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

@RHUL_Library
rhul.library
http://libraryblog.rhul.ac.uk/
youtube.com/LibraryRHUL
# Appendix I – Planning a search strategy example

## Analysing the question / topic

### What exactly is the topic you are searching for?

**Example:** “In the avant-garde films of the 1920s, everything we see, including the human being, is subservient to rhythm & movement.” Discuss.

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.

### What are the main concepts or keywords for your topic?

**Example:** avant-garde films / 1920s / what we see on film / rhythm and movement

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.

### Are there any similar words that describe each of these concepts?

**Example:** art films, experimental films / early 20th Century, pre-war / Mise-en-scène, frame, screen, represented / Pace, flow, editing

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

### How might you combine these keywords together to search?

**Example:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operator</th>
<th>Combination</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>Avant-garde OR experimental</td>
<td>would return results containing <strong>either</strong> the term 'avant-garde' or the term 'experimental'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AND</td>
<td>Avant-garde AND films</td>
<td>would return results containing both terms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix II: 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

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

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 encyclopaedias.

Scan this code to watch a video tutorial on searching for an e-book! Or go to this URL: 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/CX6RlA-lTrs](#)

**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](#)

*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.

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

- 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

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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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Books, Music and Films</th>
<th>Journals by Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in subject</td>
<td>contains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the title</td>
<td>contains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>television</td>
<td>aggression</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Publication Date: Any year
Material Type: All items
Language: Any language
Start Date: Day Month Year
End Date: Day Month Year

**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.