Finding Articles – A Guide for NCTC Online Students

The first part of this document shows a search using OneSearch, a tool that allows users to search all our databases at one time. It can be a great time saver.

The second part of the document demonstrates a search in a single database. We have many databases available and the search process is essentially the same for all of them. The main difference between the databases is each one is looking for articles in a different group of publications. The example here is from the EBSCOhost Academic Search Premier database. At the end of this document are some links to video tutorials that you might find helpful.

Both methods of searching have their advantages and disadvantages, but you’ll find good articles using either method. Using the databases to find sources is easier than doing a Google search you don’t have to sort through a lot of poor quality content to get to a good source. When using the databases, you can be confident the sources being searched are credible, quality sources.

Please don’t hesitate to contact the library if you have questions or need help. When contacting us, please identify yourself as an online student, what class you are in and, if possible, what you’re working on and what databases you’ve tried so far.

Using OneSearch to find articles

Navigate to the library home page via the library link on the Northland homepage:

Select OneSearch on the library home page:

Click here to open OneSearch:
Enter search terms and use the drop down menu to specify type of search:

You can search for our Books AND articles, (the Books & More search), but often you’ll just want articles. If you do just want articles, select Articles & More.

Note: Using quotation marks around search terms indicates you want the words to appear together, in this order. It’s a simple trick that makes your searching more specific and much more efficient!

Then click the FIND tab:

The initial search shows 67,732 items. All these items will be full text, meaning you can see the full article, not just a summary. A very quick way to limit your search is to EXCLUDE newspaper articles:
Put a check in the Exclude Newspaper Articles box and your results list is updated. The new results list now has 5,027 items:

There are more options that will allow you to narrow your search and refine your results list. Another quick way to do this is to select a date range.

Scroll down the page a bit to reveal the Year of Publication function:
Enter a date range and click the Set tab:

The results list now has 818 items:

Another great way to narrow your results is to select a publication FORMAT type. Journal articles are scholarly, research articles. You may be required to use this type of article. If you don’t need journal articles, you may want to look only at the magazine articles. Clicking Magazine Article will refresh the results list.

There are now 271 articles. They are all from magazines and all have been published between 2012 and 2015.

By using the Narrow Search options, the results list has reduced from 67,732 items to just 271 items. That’s still a lot, but your search is looking for your topic in millions of articles.

You can arrange your articles in date order by using the Sort function.

Date Descending shows the most recent article first. Date Ascending shows the oldest article first. Relevance shows what the search system thinks is the best article first. It’s a good idea to decide that yourself by actually reviewing more than the first article listed.
Scroll through your results and find an item that might meet your needs. To open an article, click the Get Full Text link:

A new window opens, displaying the article ... expand the window:
The full article is presented. Usually an abstract (a summary of the article) is provided. You can scan the abstract to see if you want to read the entire article. All the databases provide tools to maximize your use of the article, such as printing, citations, email, etc ... (the location of these tools on your screen will vary, depending on which database provides the article).

Please note:
There are intermittent glitches with OneSearch. Sometimes an article will not open, or the system says the article is not available. Usually, you are able to find other, appropriate articles that open fine. If you are having problems and need help, PLEASE LET US KNOW!

The next section of this document demonstrates searching a single database.
To search an individual database:

Select Library on NCTC homepage:

On the library homepage, select Database Menu:

Select a database to use. **EbscoHost** Academic Search Premier is a very good, general topic database. Most users will find some articles on their topic in this database.

When you click the link to open a database, you’re prompted to sign-in. Online students with NCTC as their ‘home campus’ may sign-in with your StarID.

**Students who do not have NCTC as their ‘home campus’**: You need to request a library account number from the library (a StarID issued from a campus other than NCTC will not work to sign-in to our subscription databases). OR you can access the library databases available to you at your ‘home campus’.
After you sign-in, the main search screen opens:

Enter your search terms in the window and click the Search tab:

Your result list appears:

26 articles have been found:

Some are from academic, scholarly journals:

Some are from general periodicals (the type of magazines we’re most familiar with):

Many options are available to refine your results:

To see only the articles with full text available choose Full Text:

To see articles published during a certain time period, adjust the Publication Date range:

After making your selections, click the Update tab:
After refining to full text only, there are 16 items:

To see more about an individual article, click the title link:

A page opens that (usually) provides an abstract, which is a summary of the article.

Access the full text via the link(s) in the upper left:

On the right are several tools to use: print, save, e-mail, cite, etc.
REMEMBER ...

All the different databases function in generally the same way ... you enter your search terms, refine your results, and select an article that meets your needs. Each database will have a different visual design to their page layout, but don’t let that throw you ... the process is the same: enter your search terms, review your results, refine your results, and select an article. Don’t hesitate to click the HELP tab that is somewhere on your screen ... AND FEEL FREE TO CONTACT THE LIBRARY FOR HELP!!

You may wish to view tutorials for some of the databases to become more familiar with the search process:

EbscoHost YouTube index:
https://www.youtube.com/user/ebscopublishing

EbscoHost Basic Search:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Z1vfMKY-ks

ProQuest YouTube index:
http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL943D4F9759615B70

Some tips ...

Finding good sources takes time.

Gather more articles than you are required to use. An article that looked great when you first glanced through it may end up not being very good. If you have more articles that you need, you will be able to pick the best ones, and discard the others.

When you find an article, print the citation!

When using a citation provided by the database, double check it for accuracy before turning in your assignment.