

Welcome! My name is Meg Grotti and I am the library selector for the School of Education. This tutorial will show you how to find articles in an education related database. If you are unsure which databases are commonly used to search for education related research, please take a minute to view the introduction to education resources tutorial.

The search tips that I'm going to show you are short cuts that can be added to the toolkit of strategies that you already use when you're searching online. Try mixing and matching these strategies and bringing them into your own search repertoire as you search the library databases.

To locate a specific database click on the databases icon on the library homepage, and enter a known database name. Clicking on the name of the database will bring you directly to that resource. Most library databases will have a logic and appearance much like this one.

First, there are keyword search boxes. This is where you will enter your search terms. Next, notice the drop-down menus next to each search box. These drop-downs allow you to choose where in the record you would like the database to search for your keywords. There are also options allowing you to select how you would like to connect to your search terms.

If you want to try searching in whole sentences, you can select the "SmartText" search option. However, I recommend that you use this function in conjunction with the default - which are boolean options - so that you can be more specific about what you're looking for. Using the default AND will combine your terms so that both appear in each search result that you receive. Using OR will return either one of your search terms. For example you may wish to use OR to connect closely-related terms such as "international students OR foreign students". This is a great strategy because it allows you to cast a wider net when searching.

Finally, you can also use NOT to keep unwanted items out of your search. Such as "portfolio NOT electronic". You'll note that one of the concepts I am searching here is a phrase made up of more than one word. When you're searching for a phrase, it's best to put the whole concept in quotation marks as I've done here. This tells the database to search for each of these words in this exact order. Below the search are limits, which filter your results and keep unwanted items out.

Some of the most helpful limits here in the ERIC database are the limit to peer-reviewed publications - which will return only high quality scholarly results - and the limit for education level, which will allow you to select the area of education that you are interested in researching.

In this search I am going to use an advanced search strategy called truncation. To truncate a word shorten the word to the point at which it does not change depending upon its variant forms. For example, if I type "comprehend" and add an asterisk (*) my search will return both my core term, "comprehend", and also variants such as comprehension, comprehending, and comprehended. Because in this search we want results with both the concept of verbal working memory and the concept of understanding or comprehension, we will connect the two search boxes with AND. Now we are ready to search.

Here we are on the results screen. To view an item's abstract or summary, hover over the magnifying glass to the right of the record. Viewing the abstract is a great way to determine if this article will fit your research needs. Pay special attention to the words that you're finding in the abstract and also the subject headings in your results. Oftentimes this is how you will discover the best keywords and phrases to use in subsequent searches.

Please remember that these strategies do not represent the only way to successfully search. However, I hope that you've come away from this tutorial with a few new tricks to use when conducting research.

For more information on how to access the items that you find in library databases, please see the using "Get It" tutorial.

Finally, please remember that I'm always happy to help you in your searching. If you aren't sure where to begin, or if you just need a little bit of help finding materials, please be in touch. I'm happy to help!