

Module 3.3 How do you know where to start?

Remember back to 3.1? This is more of a wayfinder tutorial. The database thesaurus can also help with the controlled vocabulary terms..

In this tutorial we're going to cover where to start searching for different types of information in the U of A libraries. As discussed in Module 2, where you search is dependent on what you need and where would be the most logical place to find that information.

If you need to know whether Dorian Gray is a character or an author, Wikipedia would be a good place to start.

If you need to know what life was like when Oscar Wilde was writing *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, then you might look for a book or an encyclopedia article on the Victorian Era. Encyclopaedias and books are best found in the library catalogue.

If you need a critical analysis of the themes, plot, or characters of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, then you will want to choose one of the library's databases, because that's where scholarly articles can be found.

The library resources can be tricky to navigate so before we go any further let's have a look at the library website and I'll explain a few things.

On the library homepage, the default search is Ebsco Discovery. It searches ~100 different databases and library catalogues, so you'd get books, ebooks, articles, reports, and more in your results.

If you are looking for books, ebooks, DVD, microfilm, or other media, check the library catalogue, shown here as classic catalogue. The catalogue is a great place to search for reference sources, like encyclopedias.

As you know now, the libraries have many different databases. In fact, we have more than a thousand.

The content included in databases has been selected based on it being relevant to the subject areas it covers. For example, the database *SciFinder* contains resources about chemistry and related subjects. You would not want to use it for an art history paper. So how can you determine which ones are best for your research needs?

To assist you in determining the best databases for your research you can look on the libraries home page under the "Subjects" link and navigate to the subject area that seems most appropriate for your research. For example, if you were looking for information on an education topic you would go to the databases link under Education. There you will find a variety of options from which to choose. If you were looking for information on adult education you would choose the "Adult Education" link. Under there

you will see a number of databases that contain pertinent information. On the right hand side of the screen there is a link for each database that provides more information about the scope covered by that particular database.

There will be overlap of content between databases but there will also be unique content. There is no one database that will cover all subjects, therefore, it is important to never limit your search to only one database as you could be missing a very important resource for your research.

Epilogue to first three tutorial clusters: now you've covered etc., etc., etc.

We hope you feel like you have some more strategies and ways of thinking about what would be a good topic, what kinds of publications would contain the information you need, and where you can go to find it.

If you find that you have questions as you work on your research, please do not hesitate to contact your subject librarian.