

Catalog and Database Search Tips

How do I start searching for information on my topic?

Use keywords – any words that represent your topic – and **pay attention to the subjects that you encounter on your search**. When you start a search, sometimes you're not that familiar with the special vocabulary of that field.

Think of as many words as you can that represent your topic and see where they take you. As you find books and articles, note which words people use to talk about your topic.

What's a keyword?

Any word associated with the book or article. It could be a word in the author's name, in the title of the book, in the publisher's name, or any word in the full-text of the article.

What's a subject?

What the article or book is actually about. Sometimes books or articles have titles that don't actually describe their information content. Subjects (also known as descriptors or specialized vocabulary) are **assigned** to a book or article to represent the subject of that books or article. In other words, searching for the keyword PLAY might get you books where the author or publisher's name includes the word PLAY. Maybe you'll find books on professional sports with the word PLAY in the title. However, if you're only interested in books on how young children use PLAY in mental development, try looking for PLAY as the subject of the book.

What do I do if I get too much?

Use more keywords. Often the problem is too much information, so be as specific as you can in describing your topic. Think about the field of study, the people and places, and the dates involved in your topic.

Try subject searching.

Use whatever subject searching is available – this will make your search much more targeted.

Using subject searching will make sure you only find books and articles that are really focused on your topic.

What do I do if I get too little?

Try synonyms. Maybe people use slightly different words to talk about your topic. If you can't find anything using "experimenting on animals", try words that have a similar meaning like "animal rights", "lab animals", or "animal testing."

Try broader subjects. Especially when looking for books, try using words that describe the next larger topic. If you can't find a whole book on "ginseng", try looking for books on "alternative medicines" or "herbal remedies."

Why care about *keywords*?

If we do a search on the word "play", you will get a variety of results. This is a case where you would want to use multiple keywords. What types of "play"? What exactly are you looking for in terms of "play"? If you were looking for "play baseball", do a search for that term to narrow your results.

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the EBSCOhost search results for the query "play baseball". The search was performed in the Academic Search Premier database. The results list shows 1 of 1794 items. The selected item is a detailed record for an article titled "DNA TO PLAY: MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL'S USE OF DNA TESTING ON CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICAN PROSPECTS IN THE AGE OF THE GENETIC INFORMATION NONDISCRIMINATION ACT OF 2008".

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Document Type: Article

Subject Terms: *DNA fingerprinting
*BIOETHICS
*DISCRIMINATION in employment
*GENETIC screening

Geographic Terms: UNITED States

Company/Entity: MAJOR League Baseball (Organization) DUNS Number: 624169553

Abstract: The article focuses on the use of deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) testing performed by the U.S. Major League Baseball (MLB) organization on candidate baseball players from Central and South America. Topics include the U.S. Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA), bioethics, and genetic discrimination in employment.

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The screenshot also shows the EBSCOhost interface with various search options and a sidebar with tools like "Add to folder", "Print", "E-mail", "Save", "Cite", "Export", "Create Note", "Permalink", and "Bookmark". The bottom of the page displays the system tray with various application icons and the date/time (11:04 AM 8/31/2012).