Library Research Skills for Sociology 1100
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Overview
1. Scholarly journals
2. Why we cite
3. Choosing a topic (you will need to refine or revise!)
4. Searching (and refining your search)

Scholarly journals
This assignment requires you use:
• Scholarly research journal articles
  o Watch: The Information Life Cycle (UNLV Libraries, Vimeo)

Citations in ASA Style
Sociologists, including sociology students like you, follow the American Sociological Association Style Guide. Scholars follow these to:
• Show their own place in the sociological conversation
• Acknowledge sources of ideas

The databases will format ASA references for you, but you must refer to an ASA guide and fix errors.
• No ASA option from the database? Copy the Chicago-formatted reference, and edit as needed, based on the ASA guide handout.

Choosing your topic & developing a search statement
Choose a topic that is interesting to you. Get ideas from your experiences, the textbook, or lectures.

Write a search statement about something that you could research.
If you’re not certain yet, you can make this general, but you will need to refine the topic once you find some articles.

1. Come up with a search statement or question. You can refine it later if it’s too general.
   Example: What are the effects of female athletes’ depictions in the media?
   [I can adjust and improve this question once I see what research is available]

Your search statement: ________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

library.vcc.ca
2. Identify concepts from your search statement
   Example: athletes, depictions, women, media
   Concepts from your statement: ____________________________
   __________________________________________________________

3. List related words and synonyms for each concept from your search statement
   Example:
   Athlet* or sport*
   Wom?n OR female
   Depict* OR portray*

   Related words & synonyms for words from your statement:
   ____________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

Searching library research databases for sociology

VCC Libraries subscribe to many research databases, which include peer-reviewed journals such as
Canadian Journal of Sociology and Canadian Review of Sociology.

From the library homepage – library.vcc.ca – select Articles & Resources by Subject → Sociology → Go
These are the research databases:
Sociology database; Canadian business & current affairs database; Academic search complete.

Scroll down for Statistics Canada

Sociology database is most relevant so let’s start with that:
Note: Advanced Search is easier for multiple concepts. Click Advanced Search if you don’t see a white screen with three boxes. If you get an error message when searching, allow ProQuest to install cookies.

4. Enter your search concepts.
   • Put words with similar meanings together in one search box with or
   • Put each concept in a different search box
   • Use Add a row to add more search boxes, to enter additional concepts
   • Use * for different word endings: athlet* = athlete, athletics, athletes
   • Use ? for possible mid-word letter substitutions: wom?n = woman OR women
   • Select Peer reviewed
   • Click Search

• Notice that I do not use any phrases, because authors will all phrase concepts differently.
  ○ Fixed phrases are ok, eg: “social media”
  ○ If you are too specific you probably won’t get much: eg: “depictions of women”
5. Look at your results. If there are too few or too many, **Modify search** to change it:

![Search Query](image)

5,634 results

6. For example, I can search for my terms only in the article title and abstract (more relevant):

![Search Query](image)

7. Explore other database features, like **Publication date; Document type; Language**, etc. (along left)

![Document Type](image)

8. When you find something that looks relevant, click **cited by**, to find related articles. For example, 17 articles all have this article in their references list & are possibly relevant:

![Article Cited](image)

9. Click an article title for more information
10. Email the article to yourself. **Copying & pasting the URL will not work.**
   - Click **Cite** and copy the citation. **Remember to check it against a guide!**
   - Look under Related items and Cited by to find similar articles.

11. Explore other research databases, like **Academic Search Complete**

12. Click **Find it at VCC**
   - It might be in another VCC article database
   - If “Find it” doesn’t link to the full article, use **Request this item through interlibrary loan**