

Bodleian iSkills: Preparing for your literature review in the Social Sciences

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Introduction

The course PowerPoint & workbook are available on the iSkills page: <https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/ask/workshops>

Learning outcomes:

By the end of the session, you should:

- Understand the literature review process
- Be able to plan an effective and structured search on your dissertation or thesis topic
- Know where to look for different types of information
- Have considered different methods of searching
- Know where to come for future help

Course structure:

1. The literature review process
2. Searching
3. Search tools
4. Citation searching
5. Alerts

Key links for accessing Bodleian Libraries online resources:

- SOLO <https://solo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk>
- Databases A-Z <https://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/az.php>

Doing the literature review

Key questions and some answers...

1. Why is the literature review important?
 - a. To provide a rationale for your research; to justify your research and its value in light of what has gone before
 - b. To understand your topic, how it has been researched before, and the issues involved (look at the journals in your area: the issues, the 'discourse' and genre, the methodologies used)
 - c. To develop a conceptual framework for your own research
 - d. To identify gaps in the literature
 - e. To help focus your own research question
 - f. To develop your own argument

2. Why be methodical?
 - a. To produce a true, comprehensive, and unbiased picture of previous research
 - b. To identify what research is and is not available
 - c. To justify what you want to include in your review (scope, coverage etc.) and what to leave out
 - d. To be transparent and replicable – it means you are more likely to find materials again
 - e. To find a manageable number of relevant results and a more efficient use of your time

3. How do you choose your search terms?

- a. Discussions with your supervisor
- b. Subject dictionaries/thesauri
- c. Initial reading
- d. Subject databases – scope notes, thesauri
- e. Repeat/iterative searching – using subject headings, thesaurus terms

4. Where do you plan to search for the literature?

- a. subject-specific databases
- b. interdisciplinary databases
- c. library catalogues
- d. references at the end of articles
- e. hand searches/online browsing of key titles
- f. citation indexes
- g. scholarly search engines, e.g. Google Scholar
- h. current awareness databases (sign up for alerts)

5. What sources are you trying to find? *Includes:*

- a. Journal articles (from peer-reviewed journals)
- b. Key books (avoiding secondary references, where possible)
- c. Conference papers/proceedings
- d. Government/academic research reports (check for reputable authors, dates, etc.) including:
 - Grey literature
 - The internet (but need to be careful)

Looking for publications by key scholars and the most recent and relevant material in the field.

Building a structured search

An example of one possible approach...

Research Topic: Bullying among boys in secondary schools			
	Concept 1	Concept 2	Concept 3
Row 1	Bullying	Boys	Secondary schools
Row 2	Harassment Victimisation Physical Verbal Fighting Teasing Cyber-bullying Aggressive behaviour	Young men Males Adolescents Teenagers Youths Young people Gender	High schools Post-primary education Private schools State schools Colleges GCSE A level KS3 / Key Stage Three

Row 3	bull* OR harass* OR victimi?ation OR "aggressive behavio?r" OR teasing OR fighting	boy* OR "young m?n" OR adolescen* OR teen* OR youth* OR "young people" OR gender	"secondary school*" OR "high school*" OR "post-primary education*" OR college*
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Example Result from IBSS (ProQuest)

The role of popular girls in bullying and intimidating boys and other popular girls in secondary school

Dytham, Siobhan. **British Educational Research**

Journal; London Vol. 44, Iss. 2, (Apr 2018): 212-229.

DOI:10.1002/berj.3324

Abstract

Despite a large amount of research focusing on bullying and exclusion in secondary schools, there is far less research focusing on cross-gender bullying and 'popular' students who experience bullying. This research provides an analysis of interactions between male and female students (aged 13–14) in a school in England. The data provides multiple examples, both in the form of observations and group interviews, of girls teasing, intimidating and bullying boys and other popular girls. The analysis also considers teachers' reactions to this behaviour, highlighting that it is often unnoticed. This paper raises this as an area for concern and suggests that future research should explore this further, both gaining more in-depth knowledge of female bullying and intimidation of boys and popular girls, and exploring ways of working with teachers and schools to support students.

Exercise 1: Search preparation

Research question: Write a short sentence about your research interest in the top box.

Underline key concepts in your sentence.

Row 1. Identify the **key concepts** in the research question and write one in each concept box (you may have more, or fewer, than 3 concepts).

Row 2. In the column under each concept write some **alternative terms** which might be useful (e.g., synonyms, alternative spellings, broader/narrower/related terms.)

Exercise 2: Building a structured search

Row 3: Decide on your search terms and note down truncation and Boolean operators as appropriate.

Combined search: Complete the search strategy by **combining** your search sets.

Research question:			
	Concept 1	Concept 2	Concept 3
Row 1			
Row 2			
Row 3			
Combined search			

Search Tools & Resources

Use <https://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/az.php> to search for these resources.

Major platforms for social science

bibliographic databases



EBSCOhost

Content includes Anthropology Plus, British Education Index, Business Source Complete



Ovid

Content includes Global Health, MEDLINE, PsycINFO



ProQuest

Content includes Applied Social Sciences Index & Abstracts (ASSIA), EconLit, Education Collection (including ERIC), International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS),

Sociological Abstracts, Worldwide Political Science Abstracts, Dissertations & Theses Global

The logo for Scopus, featuring the word "Scopus" in a bold, orange, sans-serif font.

Scopus

Content includes MEDLINE, EMBASE, Compendex, GEOBASE

The logo for Web of Science, featuring the words "Web of Science" in a bold, black, sans-serif font, with a trademark symbol (TM) to the right.

Web of Science

Content includes Social Sciences Citation Index

Primary Sources

News

- Multi-regional / Current
 - Nexis
 - Factiva
- Regional
 - China Core Newspapers Database
 - Ethnic NewsWatch (mainly US, ethnic and minority press)
 - Nikkei Telecom21 (Japanese news and finance)
 - Pravda Digital Archive (1912-2009)
 - Russian Central newspapers
 - Times of India (1838-2010)
 - WiseSearch (China)

- News Archives
 - ProQuest (New York Times, Guardian, Observer, Washington Post)
 - Foreign Broadcast Information Service (1974-1996)
 - Digital Archives of the Times, Financial Times, Economist, Daily Mail
 - UK Press Online: Daily Mirror, Daily Express

Data and statistics

- Multi-regional:
 - UK Data Service International Data (World Bank/UN/IMF)
 - OECD iLibrary
 - Emerging Market Information Service
- Regional:
 - Indiatat
 - China Data Online
 - Americas Barometer

Lists of IGO's, NGO's and Institutes (for grey literature):

- PolicyFile: research organizations, think tanks, university programmes and NGOs listed
- CIAO (Columbia International Affairs Online): grey literature from 100s of research institutes

Theses and dissertations:

- ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global
- EThOS (British Library's electronic thesis delivery service)
- Oxford University Research Archive (ORA)
- SOLO (printed copies held in libraries)

Conference proceedings & working papers:

- PapersFirst & ProceedingsFirst
- Web of Science
- ZETOC
- Working papers generally available on institutional websites or subject-based repositories such as RePEc (economics papers) and Social Science Research Network (SSRN).

Exercise 3: Citation searching

Citation searching allows you to find new and current research based on earlier research as well as giving you an idea of the impact of a particular paper. The following task uses Web of Science.

1. In **Databases A-Z** search for **Social Sciences Citation**

Index: <https://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/az.php>

2. Search the SSCI using your structured search from before – you can break down the search as you have seen demonstrated in the ProQuest database and then combine your various searches from the search history.
 - a. Look at your results sorted by **Relevance** and pick a few titles that have been highly cited – you can save them to a **Marked List** to export later.
 - b. Sort your results by **Citations: Highest First** and pick a few titles that look relevant – these can also be saved to a Marked List.
3. Click on the **Citations** number for a title you are interested in. You will see a list of articles that have cited that title – some of which may also be relevant to your research.



4. Click on the title of an article that interests you and then on the first author. You could also perform a search for a particular author from the main search screen.

- a. For any number of titles that interest you can set up an email alert to tell you when they have been cited by a new article. First you will need to sign in or create a free account.
- b. Sign in or click **Register** to create an account.
- c. Click on the title of any article that interests you, then click **Create Citation Alert** and **Create**.

Exercise 4: Setting up a search alert

You will be using ProQuest databases: <https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/>

Once you have found some useful search results, you can set up an alert that will notify you every time new material is added to the database which matches your search criteria.

1. To do this on ProQuest, you first need to have a My Research account, so click on this icon  in the top right of the screen
2. Click on Sign into My Research
3. If you don't already have a ProQuest My Research Account, click on **Create My Research account**
4. Fill in the short online form and click **Create Account**
5. Then click on Go to my research
6. At the top right of the screen, return to your previous search, by clicking on the icon for recent searches: 

To set up an email alert, select the option **Create Alert**.

7. Complete the four online steps to set up your alert.
(**Note: Step 3** – make sure you select **Yes**, to include details of the search you used to set up the alert. You may also want to change the default drop down option, to include older documents that are added to the database.)



STEP 3-DEFINE YOUR ALERT CONTENT

Include search details: Yes No

Include highlighting: Yes No

Include:

8. You will now receive email alerts at the frequency you have chosen, listing all new material added to the database.

Exercise 5: Keeping up to date with journals

Information sources are increasingly varied and vast, and monitoring the latest developments is especially challenging for those engaged in interdisciplinary research. Developing a method for keeping up to date with new research is a key step in the research management process.

In this task, you will set up an email alert to get new research to come to you from selected academic journals. This task uses JournalTOCs, a freely-available journal current awareness service providing access to recent tables of contents from over 33,000 scholarly journals.



Set up a journal table of contents alert

Open a new tab in your web browser and go to JournalTOCs

<http://www.journaltoocs.ac.uk/>

Sign In, or if you do not have an account already, **Sign Up** for an account.

Search for broad keywords relevant to your research and in the results list on the left tick the check boxes of any journal titles

you are interested in. You do not need to click save or ok. At the top of the page, hover over your account name and select **Followed Journals**. From here you can see the journals you follow.

You can now choose whether you wish to receive email alerts when new tables of contents are published for your followed journals.

Make sure the check box next to **Email Alerts** is ticked if you want to receive email alerts.