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Database Searching: Basics

library@tcd.ie | www.tcd.ie/library | [@tcdlibrary](https://twitter.com/tcdlibrary)



LEARNING OUTCOMES



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Following this session, you should be able to:

- Break down your research question
- Understand what databases are and how to access them
- Build an effective search strategy
- Find more help if needed



Stock Photo: Students using computers.



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Breaking Down Your Research Question



YOUR RESEARCH QUESTION



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A research question should be:

- Specific
- Focused
- Clearly formulated
- Well defined (no ambiguity)



Stock photo: People doing research.

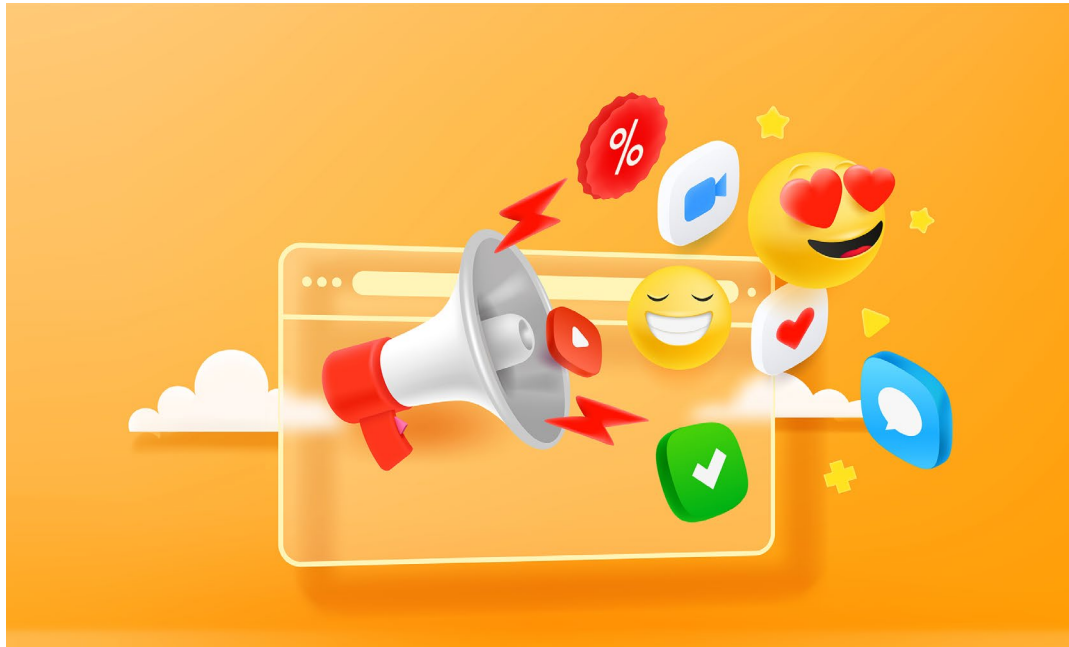
RESEARCH QUESTIONS EXAMPLES



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Good or bad? What do you think of these as research topics?

Take 2 minutes to discuss with your neighbour.



Why are social networking sites harmful?



How is glacial melting affecting penguins in Antarctica?

QUESTION 1



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Why are social networking sites harmful?

- Which social networking sites?
- What kind of harm?
- Assumes 'harm' is proven and/or accepted.



Stock photo of people holding their phones.

QUESTION 2



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How is glacial melting affecting penguins in Antarctica?

- Narrows down to a specific cause (glacial melting).
- A specific place (Antarctica).
- A specific group that is affected (penguins).



Stock photo: Penguins jumping in water.



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What are Databases and How Do I Access Them?

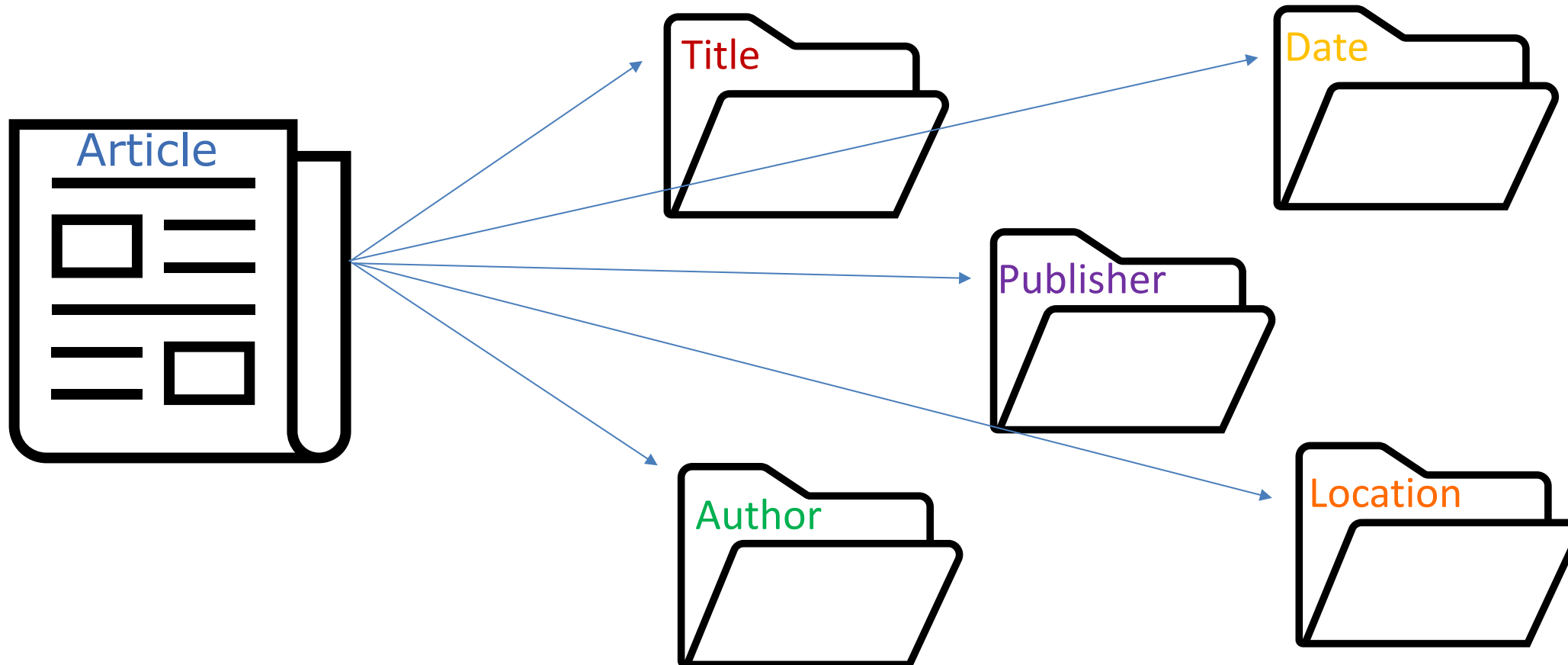


WHAT IS A DATABASE?



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A repository for storing, managing, and securing organized collections of data.



Trinity College Dublin
Library subscribes to over
**1000 academic
databases.** They contain
thousands of individual
journals, broken down by
year, volume, and issue.
There are also music, audio,
and film files.

1037 Databases

All A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z #

A

[Africa and the New Imperialism](#)

Alternate Name(s): AM Explorer Humanities Essentials

Uncover the history of European colonisation across the African continent in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century through the rare printed works, diaries and journals, correspondence, maps, photographs, and film footage presented within Africa and the New Imperialism.

[A Global History of Epidemics, 1800-1970](#)

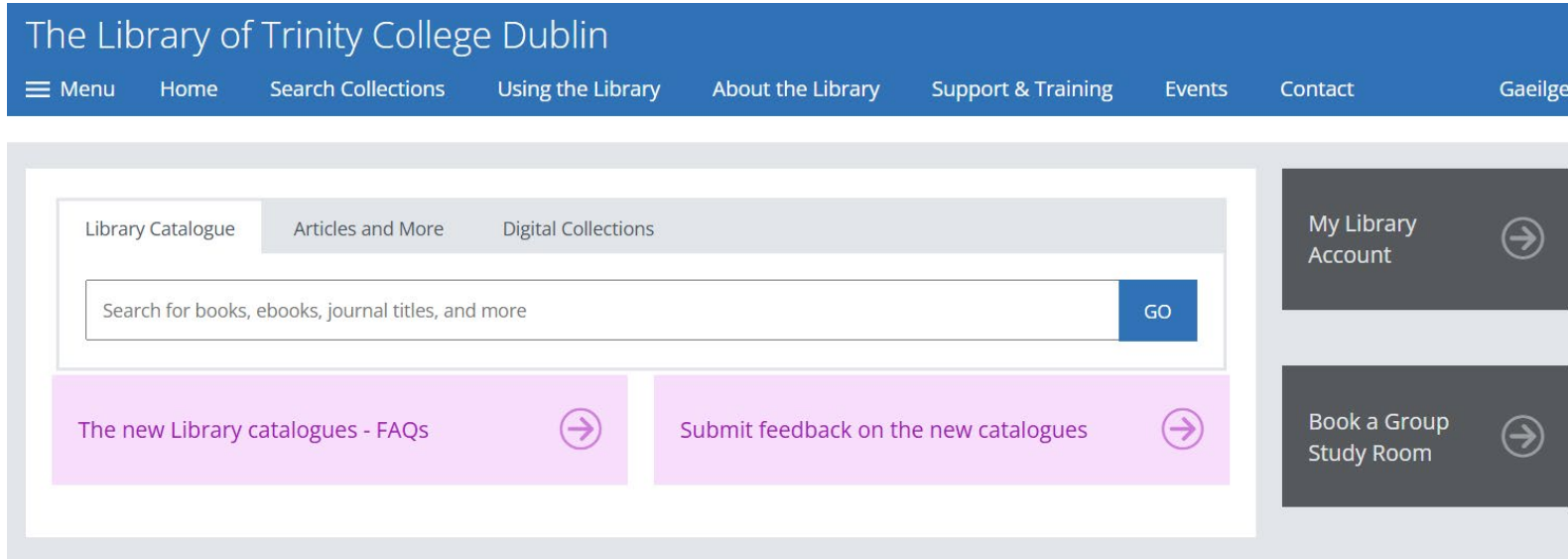
Alternate Name(s): AM Explorer Humanities Essentials

A Global History of Epidemics, 1800-1970 brings together unique primary sources to enable research into a pivotal part of history for public health and medicinal advancement. Through a broad range of sources including correspondence, official reports, diagrams, photographs and film footage, researchers can explore developments in disease prevention, outbreak management, sanitation and public welfare as well as track the spread and treatment of major epidemics and pandemics across the globe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

HOW TO FIND DATABASES



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- Go to tcd.ie/library
- Scroll down to find [Databases A-Z](#)
- Search alphabetically for the database or search for a specific name

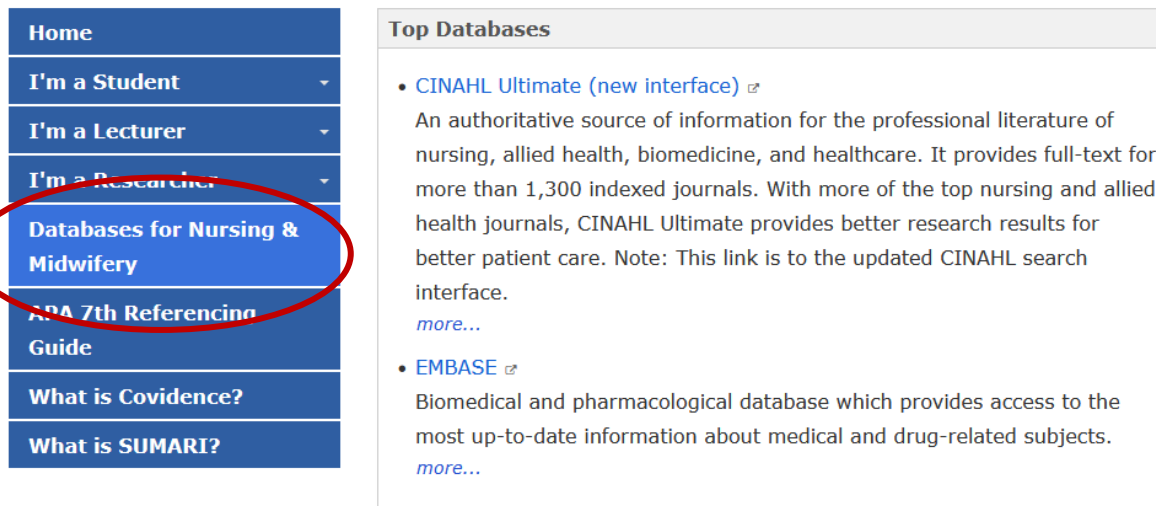


HOW TO FIND MY DATABASES?



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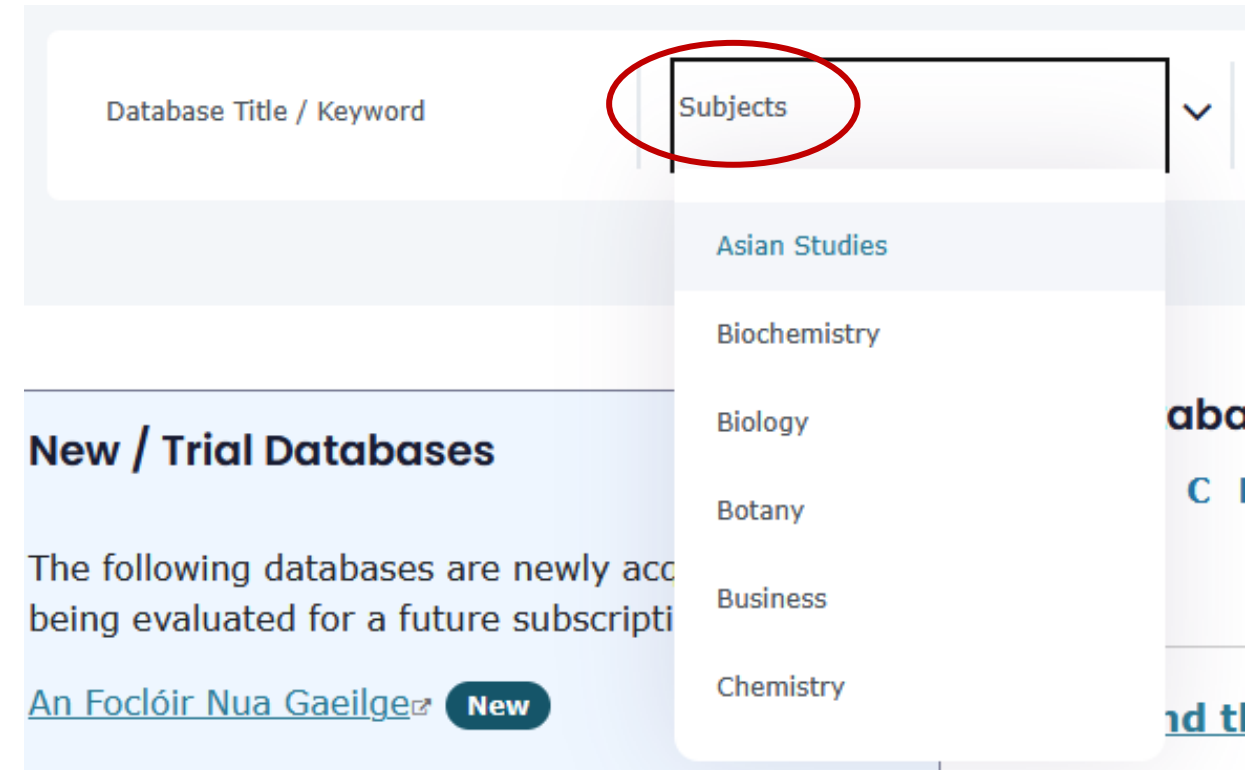
Subject Librarian's Page



The screenshot shows a navigation menu on the left with the following items: Home, I'm a Student, I'm a Lecturer, I'm a Researcher, **Databases for Nursing & Midwifery** (highlighted with a red circle), APA 7th Referencing Guide, What is Covidence?, and What is SUMARI?. The main content area is titled 'Top Databases' and lists two databases:

- CINAHL Ultimate (new interface)** [↗](#)
An authoritative source of information for the professional literature of nursing, allied health, biomedicine, and healthcare. It provides full-text for more than 1,300 indexed journals. With more of the top nursing and allied health journals, CINAHL Ultimate provides better research results for better patient care. Note: This link is to the updated CINAHL search interface. [more...](#)
- EMBASE** [↗](#)
Biomedical and pharmacological database which provides access to the most up-to-date information about medical and drug-related subjects. [more...](#)

Subjects on Database (A-Z)



The screenshot shows a search interface with a 'Database Title / Keyword' input field and a 'Subjects' dropdown menu (highlighted with a red circle). The dropdown menu is open, showing a list of subjects: Asian Studies, Biochemistry, Biology, Botany, Business, and Chemistry. Below the search bar, there is a section titled 'New / Trial Databases' with the text: 'The following databases are newly accessible and are being evaluated for a future subscription.' and a link to 'An Foclóir Nua Gaeilge' [↗](#) with a 'New' button.

YOUR TURN!



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Spend 3 minutes finding the databases that you think will be most relevant to your studies. Share your results with a partner.



Academic
Search
Complete



WEB OF SCIENCE™

CINAHL

Basic Searching Tutorial



Digital Atlas of the Roman Empire



A WORLD-CLASS RESOURCE
FOR BEHAVIORAL AND
SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH



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Starting A Search

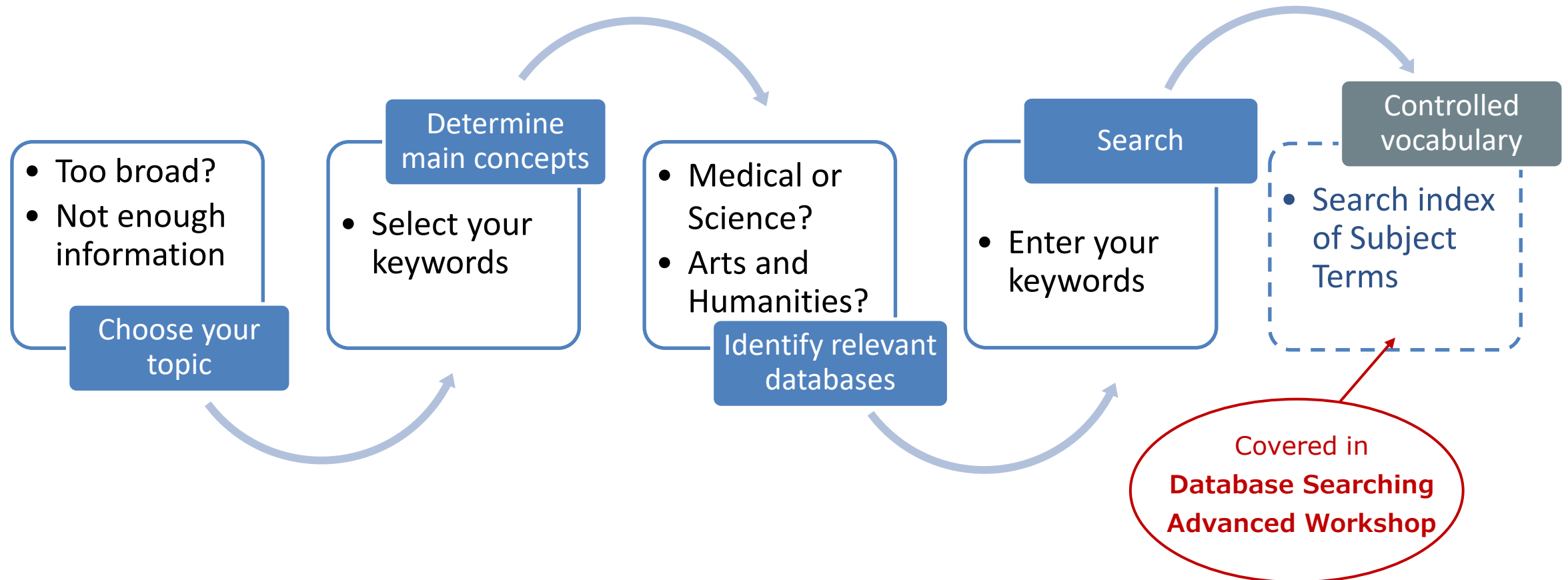


WHAT DO I DO NEXT?



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First steps to conducting a **search**.



SEARCHING FOR ARTICLES

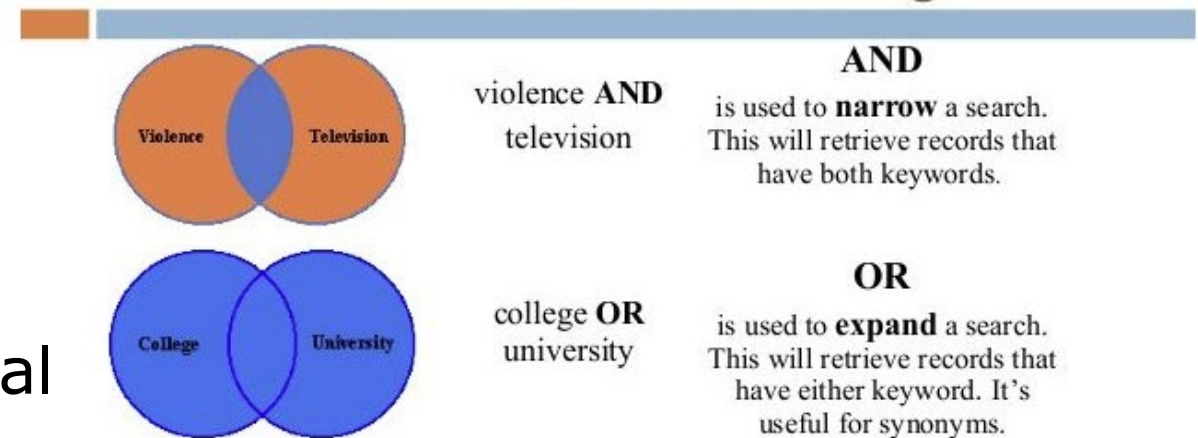


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To search databases use:

- Your own **keywords**
(include synonyms and variant spellings)
- **Synonyms** are words with identical or nearly identical meanings.
- Boolean operators (**AND, OR**)
- **Truncation symbol (*)** and consider **phrase searching (" ")**

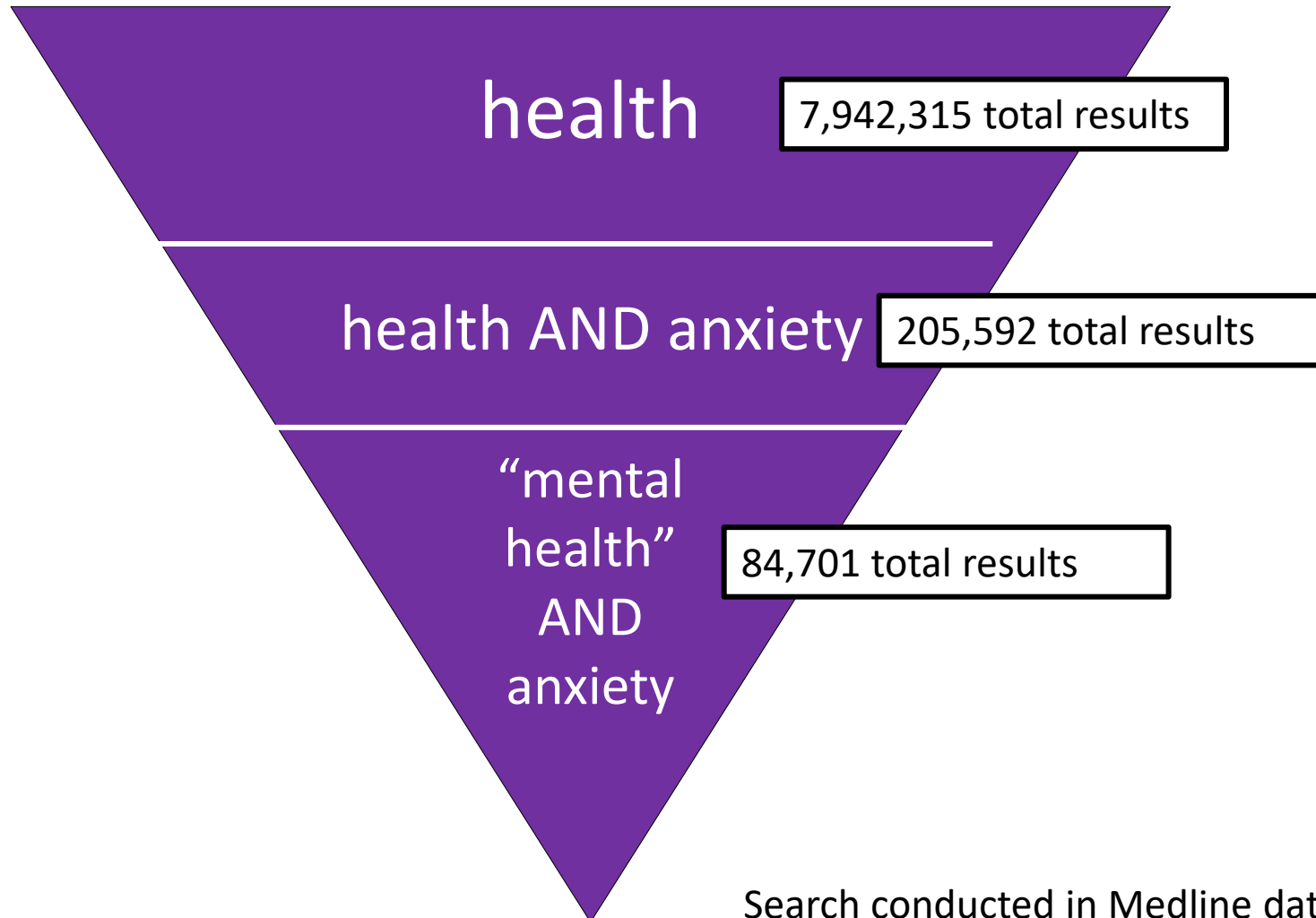
Boolean Searching



TO NARROW A SEARCH



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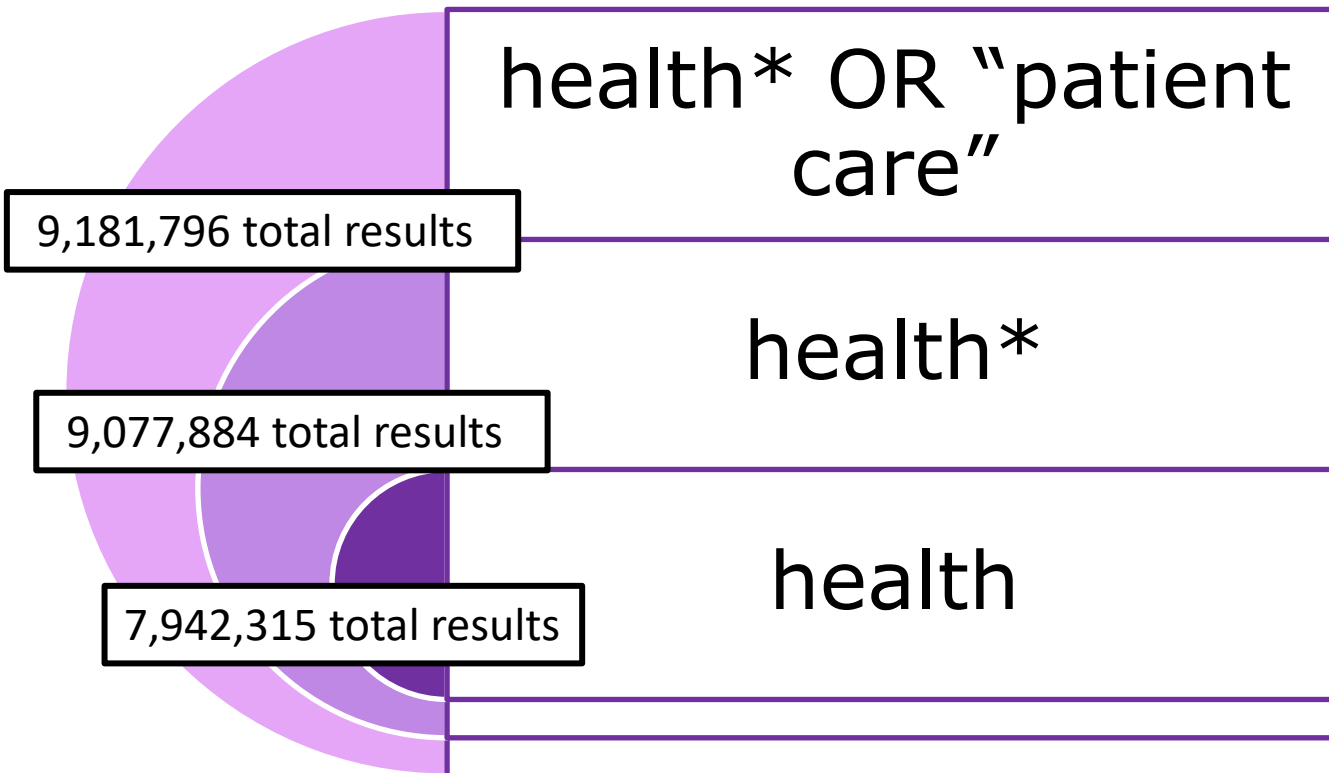
- The operator **AND**:
health AND anxiety
- Phrase searching, in quotation marks,
e.g. **"mental health"**

Search conducted in Medline database.

TO BROADEN A SEARCH



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Use the operator OR (**OR is more!**):

- to combine synonyms, e.g.
health* OR **"patient care"**
- for variant spellings, e.g. tumor or tumour
- truncate: **therap*** = therapy; therapies; therapeutic; therapeutics.

Search conducted in Medline database.



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Over To You



RESEARCH QUESTION EXERCISE



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How is glacial melting affecting penguins in Antarctica?

- 1. Determine main concepts**
- 2. Select keywords and synonyms**
- 3. Write for 2 minute**
- 4. Share your search terms with your neighbour**
- 5. What did you come up with?**



Stock photo: Three penguins walking on snow.

CONCEPTS & SEARCH TERMS



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There are 3 main concept:

Keywords

1. glacial melting

2. penguins

3. Antarctica

• glacial melting

• loss of ice

• ice melt

• penguin

• emperor penguin

• Antarctica

LET'S TRY THIS IN THE DATABASE 'ACADEMIC SEARCH COMPLETE'



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[The Library of Trinity College Dublin](#) / [Library Guides](#) / [Databases A-Z](#)

Databases A-Z

Find the best library databases for your research. Search by databases or resource title or by subject area.

This is a listing of all the databases and resources provided by the Library and is the best place to find out what is available in your subject area.

Database Title / Keyword	Subjects ▼	Types ▼	Vendors ▼	Search
--------------------------	------------	---------	-----------	--------

NOW TRY THIS SEARCH



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Searching

1. Try penguin versus penguin*
2. Try penguin* OR antarctica
3. Try penguin* OR antarctica
OR "glacial melting"
4. Try penguin* AND antarctica
AND "glacial melting"

Actions

Thinking of the keywords you captured earlier, try using

- the **truncation symbol (*)**
- **phrase searching (" ")**
- Boolean Operators
remembering **OR is more** and
AND is less



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More Helpful Searching Info



LIBKEY NOMAD – ACCESS FULLTEXT



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Download [LibKey](#)

[Nomad](#) to use

Google/Google Scholar

to find specific articles

and use our paid

subscriptions

A screenshot of the American Journal of Hospice and Palliative Medicine website. The page features a dark blue header with the journal title. Below the header, a white box displays the author's name, Mary Ann Liebert, and the journal's impact factors: Impact Factor: 1.4 and 5-Year Impact Factor: 2.0. A navigation bar includes links for 'Restricted access', 'Research article', 'First published online April 25, 2025', and 'Re-use permissions'. The main title of the article is 'Nutritional Interventions in Advanced Cancer: Scoping Review'. Below the title, the authors are listed: Aynur Aktas, MD, Shirley Thomas, MD, and Declan Walsh, MD, MSc, with a link to 'View all authors and affiliations'. The volume and issue information, 'Volume 43, Issue 6', and the DOI link, 'https://doi.org/10.1177/10499091251335249', are also provided. At the bottom, there are buttons for 'Contents', 'Get access', and 'Download PDF' (Trinity College Dublin). A blue bar at the very bottom contains the Trinity College Dublin logo and a 'Download PDF' button.

American Journal of Hospice and Palliative Medicine®

Mary Ann Liebert

Impact Factor: 1.4
5-Year Impact Factor: 2.0

Restricted access | Research article | First published online April 25, 2025 | [Re-use permissions](#)

Nutritional Interventions in Advanced Cancer: Scoping Review

[Aynur Aktas, MD](#), [Shirley Thomas, MD](#), and [Declan Walsh, MD, MSc](#) [View all authors and affiliations](#)

[Volume 43, Issue 6](#) | <https://doi.org/10.1177/10499091251335249> | [View article versions](#)

Contents | Get access | More

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PROFILE LOGIN EXAMPLES



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Set up a profile on databases you use often to permanently save searches so you can rerun them at a later date.

A composite screenshot showing three database interfaces with red boxes highlighting login options. The top left interface is the Trinity College Dublin Academic Search Complete, with a 'MyEBSCO' and 'Sign in' button highlighted. The top right interface is the Clarivate Web of Science, with 'Sign In' and 'Register' buttons highlighted. The bottom interface is the ProQuest ERIC database, with a user profile icon highlighted. The ERIC interface also includes a search bar and a 'Peer reviewed' filter. At the bottom, there is a footer for Trinity College Dublin and a description of the ERIC database's scope and coverage.

This database is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education to provide extensive access to education-related literature. ERIC provides coverage of journal articles, conferences, meetings, government documents, theses, dissertations, reports, audiovisual media, bibliographies, directories, books and monographs.
Coverage: 1966 - current

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Leabharlann Choláiste
na Tríonóide, Baile Átha

ACCESSIBILITY TOOLS



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research-ebSCO-com.elib.tcd.ie/c/oaovxf/viewer/html/i164ynexv

Reluctant warriors: Premillennialism and politics in the Moral Majority.

Published in: Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, Sep 1991, APA PsycInfo

By: Wilcox, Clyde; Linzey, Sharon; Jelen, Ted G.

INTRODUCTION

Toolbar icons: Bookmark, Print, Download, Share, Accessibility (highlighted with a red box), Full Screen, and User Profile.

Format settings

Font settings

Library Menu: Trinity College Dublin

GALE

Gale Research Complete

Q Search: [] Databases Advanced Search

View Options: Full Text Original Document (PDF)

Drama pedagogy: subverting and remaking learning in the thirdspace.

Authors: Janet Dutton and Kathy Rushton
Date: June 2022

From: Australian Journal of Language and Literacy (Vol. 45, Issue 2)
Publisher: Australian Literacy Educators' Association

Document Type: Report
Length: 9,069 words
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/elib.tcd.ie/10077/s44020-022-00010-6>

EXPLORE

More Like This

Fostering Critical Translingual Writing in an Elementary English Dominant Classroom: In this...
Language Arts, Nov. 2021.

Accessibility icons: Aa (highlighted with a red box), A+, A-, A0, and a speaker icon.

Databases A-Z

Advanced search - EBSCOhost

Trinity College Dublin

New search Browse by Research tools Links

Search articles, ebooks & more

The Library of Trinity College Dublin - Leabharlann Choláiste na Tríonóide

Language selection menu (highlighted with a red box):

Bahasa Indonesia	Čeština	Dansk
Deutsch	English	Español
Français	Hrvatski	Italiano
Magyar	Nederlands	Norsk
Polski	Português (Brasil)	Português (Portugal)
Română	Slovenčina	Slovenski
Suomi	Svenska	Tiếng Việt
Türkçe	Ελληνικά	Русский
עברית	عربي	فارسی
हिन्दी	ภาษาไทย	한국어
日本語	简体中文	繁體中文

Basic search

Search

Language settings

Your [Subject Librarian](#)

Our [HITS classes](#)

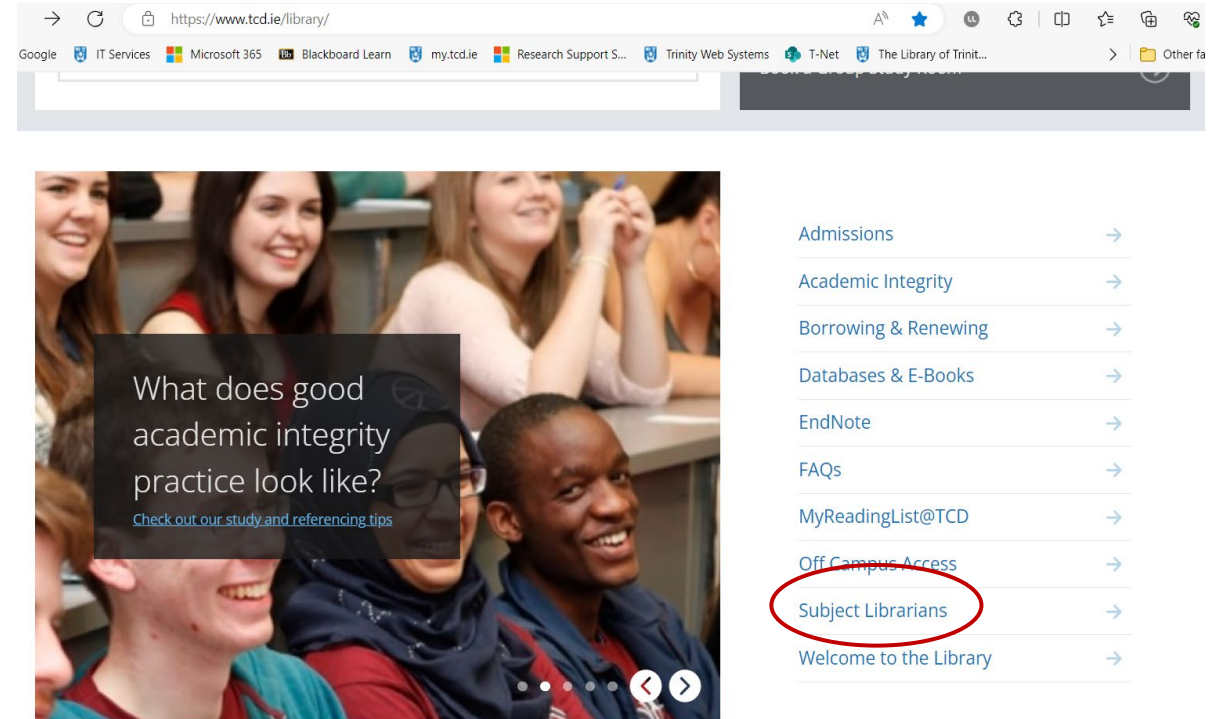
- Database Searching Advanced
- Managing Your References: EndNote 2025

Our [Guides & Tutorials page](#)

Our [LibGuides](#)

- [Writing a Literature Review](#)
- [Doing a Systematic Review](#)

Exercises on slides 5-7 developed by Dr Derek Richards - Systematic Literature Reviews presentation, Student Learning Development, TCD.





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In Conclusion





In this session you learned how to:

- Break down your research question
- Understand what databases are and how to access them
- Build an effective search strategy
- Find more help if needed

QUESTIONS?



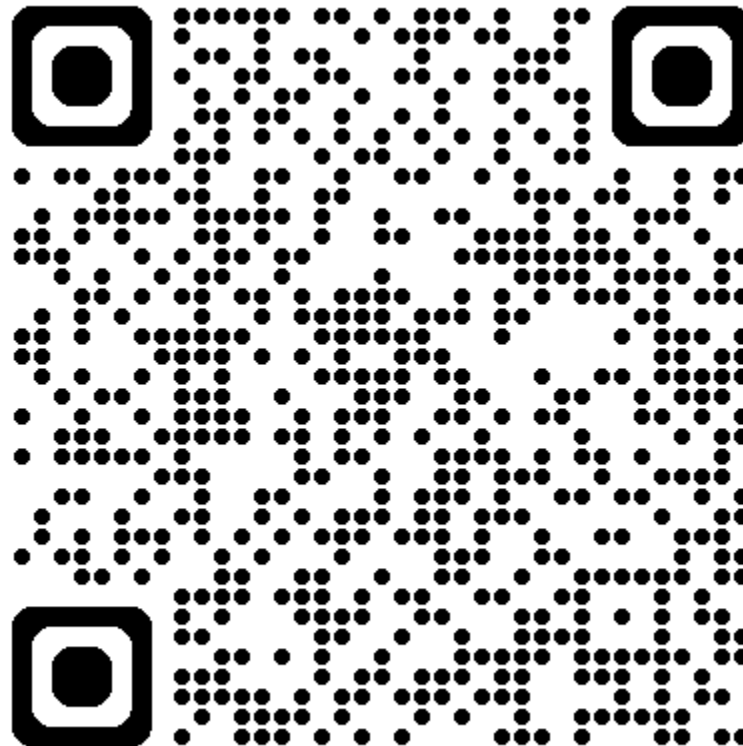
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FEEDBACK



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Please scan to complete our feedback form.

Thank You

Feel free to contact us with any queries:

Librarian Name, Librarian Email

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