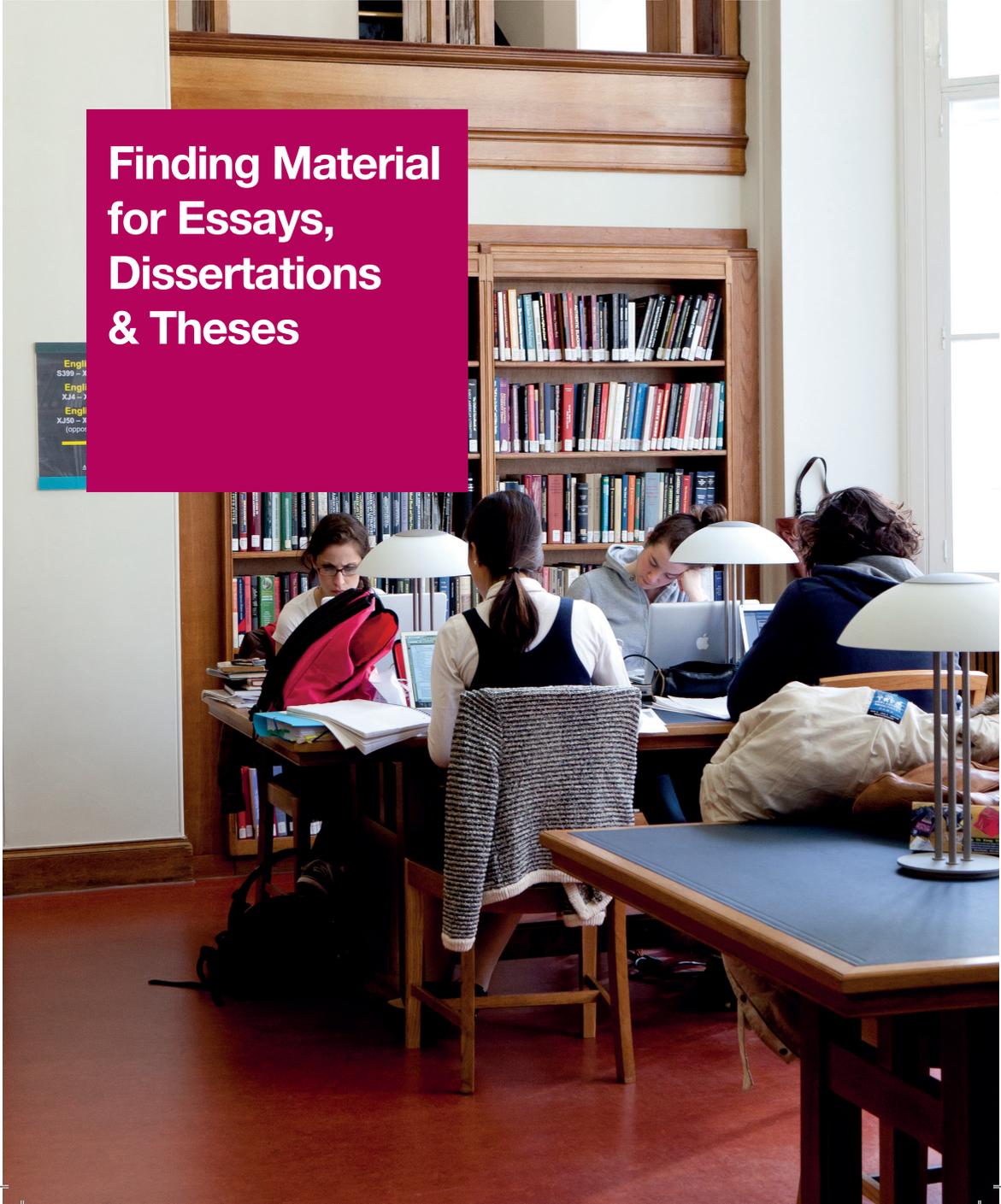




**Finding Material
for Essays,
Dissertations
& Theses**

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S399 - 3
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XJ25 - 4
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Finding Material for **Essays,** **Dissertations & Theses**

UCL Explore at www.ucl.ac.uk/library/explore searches a number of resources:-

- **UCL Reading Lists:** Easy access to course materials
- **All Resources:** Millions of electronic journal articles and other full-text resources
- **Library Catalogue:** Printed & electronic book and journal titles from UCL's standard Catalogue
- **Journal Articles:** Articles which have been published in electronic journals
- **Digital Collections:** UCL Library Services' digitised documents
- **UCL Discovery:** Open access material from UCL's publications repository, including theses
- **UCL Exam Papers:** Electronic copies of UCL's Exam Papers
- **UCL Archives:** Records of archive material in UCL's Special Collections
- **Journal Titles:** Journal titles to which UCL Library provides print and electronic access

So, when you are searching for information on a particular topic, where you see **"In resource"** just below the search box you can leave this to search for **"All resources"** and you will find details of books, journal articles, theses etc. However if you only want to find journal articles for example, you can limit your search by choosing this option as in the example overleaf:

The screenshot displays the UCL Explore website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'UCL LIBRARY SERVICES Explore' on the left and 'Guest e-Shelf My Account Sign in' on the right. Below this is a secondary navigation bar with 'New Search | Find Databases | E-journals | Help | UCL'. A breadcrumb trail reads 'Book a study room · Inter Library Loan request · Store request · Suggest a purchase · IOE Library Search' and a 'Report a problem' link is on the right.

The main content area features a large magnifying glass icon next to the word 'Explore'. Below this is a search bar with the text 'Search for' and a 'Search' button. Underneath the search bar, there is a dropdown menu labeled 'In resource' with 'All resources' selected. To the right of the dropdown is the text 'Search everything in Explore'. Above the search bar are links for 'Advanced Search' and 'Browse'.

Below the search area are four content tiles:

- New books:** 'See details of new books added to our collections during the last two months' with an image of books.
- Featured:** 'Open Access at UCL' with the UCL logo and 'Open access at UCL' text, and navigation links 'Previous', 'Stop', and 'Next'.
- Get the most from Explore:** 'Search All resources for a wealth of full text articles and other documents' with an image of a person and 'Select Library catalogue for a quick look-up of books in our libraries' text.
- From Twitter:** Two tweets: one from @IOELibrary about an online reader being unavailable, and one from @guardianculture.

As UCL subscribes to so many e-journals this sort of search will usually find thousands of results but you can sort them so that the most recent articles appear first by clicking on “**Date – newest**” at the top right-hand side of the screen:-

The screenshot shows the UCL Library Services Explore search results page. The search term is 'plagiarism' and the results are filtered for 'Journal articles'. The page displays three search results, each with a 'View Online' link and an 'SFX@UCL' icon. The first result is a reference entry for 'plagiarism' by Silk, Michael S. The second result is an article titled 'Plagiarism' by Georg, GI ; Wang, SM. The third result is an article titled 'Plagiarism' by Barczak, G. The page also includes navigation links like 'Book a study room', 'Inter Library Loan request', and 'Reading Lists'. On the left side, there are options to 'Personalize your results' and 'Refine My Results'.

If you click on “**View Online**” or [SFX@UCL](#) this should link through to the online version of the article that you have identified.

For in-depth literature searching UCL has access to hundreds of subject specific databases.

- discover what has been published on a particular **subject**
- identify journal **articles**
- identify **book chapters** in some cases, especially those in edited collections
- save time as they usually summarise articles in an **abstract**
- allow you to find out who has **cited** certain articles
- keep up to date with **new publications** in your field of interest
- confirm, check or verify **bibliographic details** in cases of doubt

Finding Material for **Essays,** **Dissertations & Theses** (cont'd)

Some databases provide access to the full-text of e.g. journal articles, but where they don't most of them link to full text via

SFX@UCL if UCL Library Services has a subscription.

Our expert Librarians provide information about the databases that cover your subject area in Subject Guides available at:-

www.ucl.ac.uk/library/subject-support/guides

Otherwise, learn more via our WISE faculty level tutorials:

www.ucl.ac.uk/library/training/guides

All databases can be found in Explore or in the A-Z list at:

www.ucl.ac.uk/library/electronic-resources/databases

...as well as by subject in a drop-down box.

For details of scope, dates covered, and search tips see  alongside the database link

Information contained within some databases cannot be found via Explore so it is often better to search them direct via **Databases A-Z**.

Theses

A copy of most UCL PhD Theses is held in our **Store** from 1910 to the present and they can be found in Explore. However, since UCL started to award its own degrees to students registering from 2007/2008 electronic versions have been submitted and in many cases theses are available in full text in UCL Discovery.

www.ucl.ac.uk/library/e-theses

Newspapers

We have access to thousands of current newspapers from around the world via **NexisUK**. Many of these regional, national and international titles go back to the middle of the 1980s.

For earlier publications there are various sources such as **The Times Digital Archive** as well as the **17th–18th Century Burney Collection Newspapers** and **The 19th Century British Library Newspapers**.

The Guardian/Observer Archive is available via Proquest Historical Newspapers as follows:

The Guardian 1821–2003

The Observer 1791–2003

Newspaper databases can be accessed via **Databases A-Z** but for a complete list and more information see:-

www.ucl.ac.uk/library/electronic-resources/newspapers

For several databases on-site, and for most databases off-site, you will be prompted for your UCL computer username and password in order to access them but for seamless access to all resources go through WTS:-

www.ucl.ac.uk/isd-extra/common/windows/wts-web/

For further information on access and troubleshooting see:-

www.ucl.ac.uk/library/electronic-resources



General advice on searching

Databases differ from one to another but there are some general tips and considerations below. However, do read the specific help pages in each database that you use in case of exceptions.

- It is worth spending some time thinking about concepts or keywords to describe your topic, before you start.
- Most databases have basic search options where you just enter your keywords into a search box, combining them together at this point, or they have advanced search options where you can enter concepts into multiple search boxes and combine them by clicking on your chosen fields e.g. title, abstract etc.
- You can combine keywords with **“AND”, “OR”, “NOT”** (or in a rarer case **“&”, “_”, “_”**) e.g. “children **AND** adults”, “children **OR** adults”, “children **NOT** adults”
- You can truncate concepts using an asterisk * e.g. politic* finds political, politics and politician (NB some databases may use other symbols such as \$ or !)
- You can mask characters with a **wildcard** character such as a question mark **?** e.g. wom?n finds women and woman (NB some databases may use an asterisk * for this)

Finding Material for **Essays,** **Dissertations & Theses** (cont'd)

- You can sometimes combine these elements in one search e.g. “wom?n* AND child*” should find records with *women*, *women’s*, *woman*, *woman’s*, *womanhood* together with *child*, *children*, *childhood* etc.
- In some databases, if you put in two words together this will be treated as a **phrase**. However, in many databases, and indeed in most search interfaces, you will need to add **double quotation marks** to search for a phrase, e.g. “ancient greece”
- Many databases have **indexes** or **thesauri** which are lists of terms that are used to group records together under the same **subject headings** for consistency. For example, in medical databases you will usually find that records for “**heart attack**” are grouped under the heading “**myocardial infarction**”. So, it is worth exploring the **thesaurus** in individual databases
- Databases differ in how you search for authors: Doe J*; Doe-J*; and Doe, J. are all examples but there is usually some on-screen help to guide you with this
- In some databases you can build up your searches step-by-step by creating what are known as **sets**. You can then combine searches by putting the sets together as you go along, rather than entering all your keywords into the search box at the start. So, you could do your search on wom?n, then your search on child*, and then access your search history screen where you can combine the two concepts by typing “#1 AND #2” (which means Set 1 and Set 2). This is particularly useful if you want to narrow your searches as you go along depending on the number of hits you get
- In most databases you can use brackets around concepts in a search to determine the order in which you wish the database to look for your terms. This is particularly useful when you have alternative words for one concept e.g. in the search “(education **OR** learning) **AND** (adult* **NOT** child*)” the database will perform the first bracketed search first, then combine it with the second set of brackets in much the same way as you would if you were building up sets
- All databases allow you to search for keywords in specific fields which are sometimes denoted by two letters e.g. article title (TI), abstract (AB), author (AU), journal title (JN in some databases, SO in others)

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