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# Finding Material for Study and Research

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**UCL Explore at**  
**[www.ucl.ac.uk/library/explore](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/explore)**  
**searches multiple resources:**

● **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 titles**

Serials which UCL Library Services subscribes to in print and/or in digital format

● **Journal articles**

Papers which have been published in electronic journals

● **Databases**

Indexes of e.g. journal articles for subject specific searching, some with full text

● **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

● **Archives catalogue**

Records of archival material in UCL's Special Collections

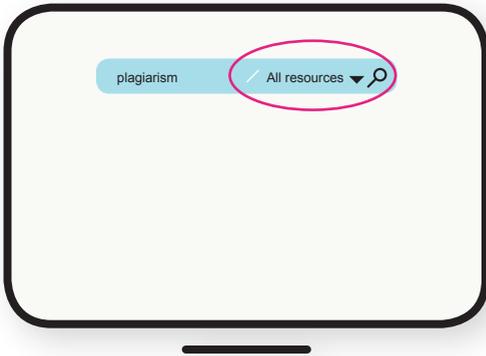
● **UCL Reading Lists**

Records, links and digitised material to support UCL's academic programmes

● **Digital Education**

**Resource Archive (DERA)**

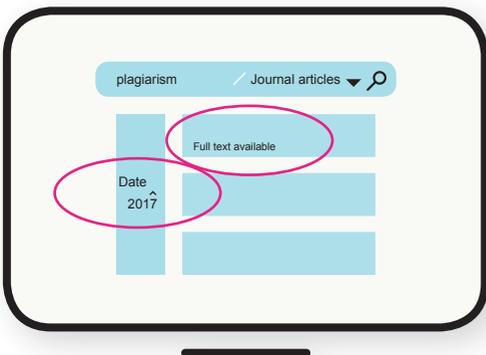
Documents on education



**To search for information** on a particular topic, leave **All resources** selected in the drop down menu to the right of the search box to find details of books, journal articles, theses etc.

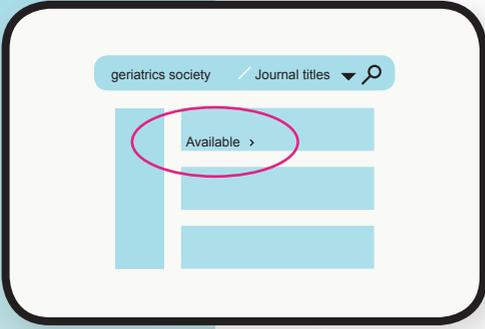


**To search a single resource,** limit your search by selecting from the drop down menu. E.g. Select 'journal articles' to search for journal articles available in electronic format.



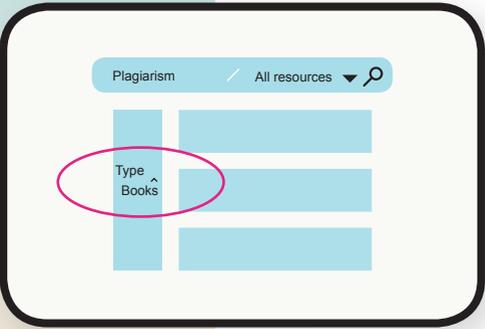
Click on **View Online** or **Full text available** to link to the online version of the article that you want to read.

UCL subscribes to tens of thousands of e-journals so this sort of search will usually find a lot of results, but you can **apply limits** on the left-hand side, e.g. to those published in the last year or so.



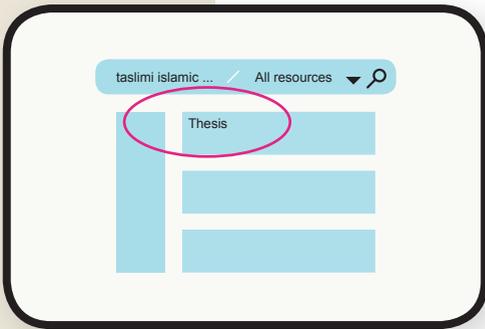
### Older Journals

If you are looking for journal articles from twenty years ago or older they may not be available online, so if you have a citation you need to search Journal titles which may be held in print format in our **Store** outside London, and can be ordered via [www.ucl.ac.uk/library/stores](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/stores)



### Books

If you are looking for books you can conduct your search with **All resources** and refine your results to books by clicking the **Books** under **Type** to the left hand side of your search results.



### Theses

UCL PhD Theses are held in our **Store** from 1910 to the present and records can be found in Explore.

Links to digital versions may also be available via **UCL Discovery** at [discovery.ucl.ac.uk](http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk) and/or **Proquest Dissertations & Theses** which has full text theses from all over the world.

## Databases

For in depth literature searching UCL has access to hundreds of subject specific databases such as Medline, PsycInfo, Geobase & Compendex. These allow for more focused research and help you to:

- 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

**Databases A-Z are available via:** [www.ucl.ac.uk/library/databases](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/databases)

- **For more information see**  
[www.ucl.ac.uk/library/electronic-resources/newspapers](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/electronic-resources/newspapers)
- **For further information on access and troubleshooting see**  
[www.ucl.ac.uk/library/electronic-resources/ejournal-faq](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/electronic-resources/ejournal-faq)
- **Unresolved problems can be reported via**  
[www.ucl.ac.uk/library/electronic-resources/problem-form](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/electronic-resources/problem-form)

## 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** which covers the period 1785-1985 as well as the **17th-18th Century Burney Collection Newspapers** and **The 19th Century British Library Newspapers**. These are also available in **Gale Primary Sources** along with various other titles including **The Economist**, **The Financial Times**, and **The Illustrated London News**. **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** (as described above)

## General advice on searching

**Databases differ from one to another but there are some general tips and considerations below.**

- Spend some time thinking about concepts or keywords to describe your topic, before you start.
- Most databases have basic search options where you just enter all your keywords into one search box, and advanced search options where you can enter concepts into multiple search boxes and select the fields you wish to search e.g. title, abstract etc.
- Combine keywords with **AND, OR, NOT** (or in rarer cases **& , \_**)  
For example:
  - children **AND** adults will find records containing both words
  - children **OR** adults will find records containing either word
  - children **NOT** adults will find records containing the first word but not the second word
- Truncate concepts using an asterisk \* e.g. politic\* finds political, politics and politician (NB some databases may use other symbols such as \$ or !)
- 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)
- 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”
- Explore **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 often find that records for **“heart attack”** are grouped under the heading **“myocardial infarction”**.



- Search for authors according to on-screen examples such as Doe J\*; Doe-J\*; and Doe, J.
- Build up your searches step-by-step by creating what are known as **sets**. Combine searches by putting the sets together, 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 often 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.
- 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)



## Need more help?

Please ask staff for help in any of our libraries or see [www.ucl.ac.uk/library/help](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/help)



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