

Basic Searching in Academic Search Complete

Begin at the library's home screen, click "Articles/Databases" and select Academic Search Complete from the list of databases.

For our sample searches, we will look for articles on the effects of age on second language acquisition.

As with most online databases, we can search for materials in a variety of ways. The options appear just below the dark green bar in the middle of the page. The first one, "Boolean/Phrase" will enable us to search for "second language acquisition" as a phrase and to add the keyword "age" with the Boolean operator "and."

For more information on Boolean searching using the words "and," "or," and "not" as operators, click the link provided here, or click continue.

[Boolean searching is the process of connecting search terms with the words AND, OR and NOT. Putting the word "and" between terms will retrieve items in which all of the search terms appear. Adding the word "or" between search terms will retrieve items that contain any one of the terms, but perhaps only one. As the Venn diagrams indicate with the blue shading, using "and" between search terms will yield dramatically fewer results than using "or" between terms. Putting "not" before a search term will eliminate items containing that term.]

The second search mode, assumes an "and" operator between terms, and the next one assumes an "or" operator. The last option, "SmartText Searching" enables us to enter up to 5,000 characters and the database will search for the most relevant terms in the article abstracts.

The search option at the right of the screen to "Apply related words" will retrieve materials with variant spellings of our search terms or even similar words – so, for example, we might pick up articles with the word *linguistic* as well as *language*.

The next group of options, to "Limit your results" can be useful in winnowing the best materials out of our results list:

Peer Reviewed refers to scholarly publications in which the articles have been reviewed by a committee of the author's peers prior to publication. This filter can be useful for academic work as it will filter out articles that appeared in popular publications intended for the general public.

The limiter for References Available can be a little confusing. All scholarly articles include references; this limiter filters for articles that reference other articles which are also available within the database.

The Image Quick View will filter the results for only those articles that contain images, and they will appear in thumbnail with the citations of the articles. We can narrow the image results with the "type" options that are offered to retrieve only photographs, graphs, maps, etc.

Let's search now for articles pertaining to age and second language acquisition. We will limit to peer-reviewed journal articles in English, and for now we will limit our search also to only those

articles available in full text online, though we will see in the advance instruction tutorial that we can obtain articles not available in full text through Interlibrary Loan.

Click search to get a numbered list of results. Each entry provides the basic citation information (title, author, publication, and date), as well as links to full-text access if available. Limiting options appear in the side panel at the left.

Articles are listed by relevancy, but the sort can be changed to date, author or or source. Mouse over the magnifying glass icon for more information, or click the title to see the full record and abstract, or summary, of the contents.

Click the full text link at the left to retrieve the entire article which can be printed, saved or e-mailed for your personal use.

We can also return to the result list and save selected article citations to a folder. Setting up an EBSCOHost account enables us to save our searches and our folder contents to view later.

In the next tutorial, we will look at refining our search using the database's subject headings, or "descriptors," and taking advantage of Interlibrary Loan for articles not available in full text in the database.