

Searching the MLA (Modern Language Association)

International Bibliography

The MLA (Modern Language Association) International Bibliography is a database purchased by Chambers Library from EBSCOHost, a large vendor of online academic databases.

Though there may be some overlap with what is available in the Gale literature products, the MLA is likely to include additional resources not found in the Gale series. It's a good idea to search more than one resource to ensure your search is comprehensive.

The database opens with the EBSCOHost basic search screen. The title of the database appears just above the search box. There are a variety of ways to search. The options appear just below the bar in the middle of the page. The first one, "Boolean/Phrase" enables searching for the title of a work such as "Young Goodman Brown" by simply typing the title into the search box. With this search mode selected, Boolean operators must be added manually.

The second search mode, assumes an "and" operator between terms, and the next one assumes an "or" operator. The last option, "SmartText Searching" allows entry of up to 5,000 characters. The most relevant terms are searched throughout the abstracts in the database. This search is useful for copying and pasting text, and it's an option that's not available for all of EBSCO's databases.

The search option to "Apply related words" will retrieve materials with variant spellings or even similar words – with this option selected, a search for Goodman Brown, for example, would also retrieve articles on British Prime Minister Gordon Brown.

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

Peer Reviewed refers to scholarly publications for which articles are first reviewed by experts before publication. The other limiters are self-explanatory. We will limit this search to peer-reviewed journal articles in English.

The results screen offers a numbered list of entries, each of which includes the basic citation information—title, publication, author and date. The title is a link to the full record. There are also links to access the article in full text or to "find it" through interlibrary loan or, in some cases, the library's print collection.

The search terms and limiters are listed on the left, with options below to narrow the results list further by date, source type, subject, or publication.

There is really no need to limit results to only those materials available in full text from within the database. Chambers Library's interlibrary loan department is able to get electronic copies of most articles that the library does not own within a matter of days.

Create a free account in EbscoHost to save searches and results. Select and save specific articles by signing in and clicking the Add to folder icon.

The advanced search screen enables searching in specific fields of the records and searching for materials from specific time periods or particular genres.

The EbscoHost interface also offers a "Visual Search" option that presents the results of a search in a graphic interface. Results can be clustered in columns or rows by subject and the trail for narrowing the search remains visible. Articles are saved by dragging and dropping the icon rather than clicking a link.

The MLA is an excellent resource for literature research. As always, should you have any questions or difficulties, the Reference Librarians at Chambers Library are available to help! Just Ask!