Database Basics

How To Use
MLA International Bibliography

Overview

• Databases are electronic indexes, with both information about, and the full text of, journal articles, useful for research.
• This guide will show you the basics of using the EBSCO version of the “MLA International Bibliography” to find journal articles on literature topics.
• There will be step-by-step instructions, followed by pictures of an actual search.

This guide is undergoing revision; its screenshots are out of date.
First Search

- There will be 3 searches to show the different ways to find articles.
- The first search will be to find articles on Edgar Allan Poe’s story “The Tell-Tale Heart”.
- Begin at LSUE’s website:
  - www.lsue.edu
- Click on the “Library” link across the top.
First Search - Step 2

• Click on the “Find an Article” link.

IMPORTANT NOTE

• If you are on-campus, you can use the other links, such as “EBSCO databases” or “Literary Reference Center”.

• If you are OFF campus, follow these steps. You will need to log in later (which will be covered at that step).
First Search - Step 3

• What you will see is not a list of databases by subject, but the companies that make those databases.
• For example, “MLA” isn’t listed, but EBSCO is. EBSCO is the company that owns the largest number of our databases.
• Click on “EBSCOhost Databases”.
• If you are OFF campus, read Step 3B.

First Search - Step 3B

IMPORTANT NOTE

• If you are on campus, you will be able to click into the databases without having to log in. This includes Bengal Village.
• If you are OFF campus, you will need to log in or “authenticate”:
  – User ID is your LSUE ID#
  – Password is “changeme”
First Search - Step 4

- Most databases contain articles on a certain subject, like literature, nursing, sports, business, or other topics. Others, like Academic Search Premier, cover many subjects. Each have descriptions.
- This list is not alphabetical.
- Click on the “MLA International Bibliography” link, NOT the “Directory”.
- Do NOT click on the little boxes.
Search - Step 5A

- Our databases are set to open to the “Advanced Search” option. It should be plain black text. If not, click on the “Advanced Search” link to get to this screen.
Search - Step 5B

• The screen says “Searching: Specific Databases…”
• If you want to see the name of the database you are searching, click on those three dots (the ellipsis).
Search - Step 5C

- Now it says which database you chose.
- The search will still work the same if you do not have the database listed. However, it can be useful, especially if you have multiple open windows.
First Search - Step 6

• Most of the topics for English will be short stories, novels, or poems. Since that is what you want to find articles about, that will be what you type into the first box.
• Ignore the first article, such as a, an, or the.
• Type in the title of your story.
• For longer titles, use quotation marks:
  – “Where are you going, where have you been”
First Search - Step 7

• Since you want to find articles about the story or poem, that is your subject.
• To the right of the box where you typed that title, there is a drop-down box.
• Click on it, and then scroll down to find “Subjects”. This will only find articles that are about your story or poem.
First Search - Step 8

• This is what the search should look like.
• Click on the “Search” button.
First Search - Step 9

- There will be a list of articles.
- Not all articles are available. There are three “types” of articles:
  - Held Locally – in the physical building
  - Full-Text Online – either HTML or PDF
  - Not available either way
- Look at the lines under the title. If it doesn’t say “Is held locally” or give a “Full-Text” link, then the article is not available.
First Search - Step 10

- Scroll further down the list.
- Number 8 says “not held locally” but does have full-text links.
- Click on the title (the blue link) for number 8 - “Frantic Forensic Oratory”.
First Search - Step 11

• This is also called the “citation” page, since it contains information about the article. Much of it you won’t need.

• The main parts are:
  – Title – the title of the article
  – Author – the author(s) of the article
  – Source – the title of the journal, date published, volume, issue, & page numbers.
  – Subject areas – what story/poem is studied
First Search - Step 12

• The last parts are important if you get the full-text directly from the database:
  – Database – the one you are searching
  – Full-Text Database – where the full-text is
  – If only “database” is listed, then it is also the source of the full-text
• This article has both HTML & PDF text
• The HTML text starts right under the article information. It has been typed in from the original article.
First Search - Step 13

• This article also has PDF full-text.
• Scroll to the top of the citation/information page about this article.
• At the top, above the title, AND at the bottom of the page, is the PDF link.
• PDF is an exact copy of the article, with the original graphs and page numbers. Most professors prefer PDF over HTML.
• Click on the PDF link.
First Search - Step 14

- PDF files open with Adobe Acrobat, a free reader that by now is installed on almost every computer.
- If a window asks for an upgrade, click on ‘no’ or ‘not at this time’ if you are in a lab.
- Since this is “inside” the browser, you must use the lower “Adobe” buttons to save or print the article.
- Page numbers are at the top.
First Search - Step 15

- Some articles are only held in the library and not available online.
- After going back to the list of results, click on the ‘3’ to get to the third page.
- Number 29 is held locally. Click on the title – “Lacan, Poe, and Narrative Repression”.
First Search - Step 16

- This citation/information page is the same as it was for the other article.
- However, there is no full-text link.
First Search - Step 17

• Scroll down further.
• There is a database listed, but no full text.
• It does say “is held locally”.
• There are two ways to find this article:
  – Use the “Periodical List” in the library
  – Search the library’s catalog
First Search - Step 18

- Open a second browser window. You can do this by “File – New Window” or going to the Start Menu and clicking “Internet” or however is easier with your browser.
- Go to the library’s website.
- Click on “Find a Book” for the catalog. (I know we’re looking for a journal, but “Find an Article” is for the databases).
First Search - Step 19

- Click on the “I-Link” picture.
First Search - Step 20

- This is the main search page for the catalog. You could also use this to find books and movies that the library owns.
First Search - Step 21

- Type the name of the journal into the box. Remember, the name of the journal is in the “Source” part of the citation page.
- This journal’s title is “MLN”. If the database listed both a title and an abbreviation, try the abbreviation first. (For example, “JAMA” is used more than the full title of “Journal of the American Medical Association”.)
First Search - Step 22

- Use the drop-down box to the right of the search box to focus your search.
- Since this is a journal, choose “Periodical Title”. A journal is a periodical, because it comes out based on a period of time, such as monthly or seasonally.
First Search - Step 23

- This is how the search should look.
- Now click on “Search”.
First Search - Step 24

- There are 3 titles found.
- The “main” record is the 2nd one, that has the call number or “book address”.
- Click on the “Details” box under the #2.
First Search - Step 25

- There are 3 listings for journals:
  - Bound – sewn together
  - Fiche – microfiche
  - Paper – stored loose in a box

- Bound & Paper will be found with the call number at the bottom of the record.
- Fiche are stored on the 1st floor.
- You will need the citation page to tell you what volume, issue, and page numbers.
Second Search

- The second search will be to find articles on Raymond Carver’s story “Cathedral”.
- Since there are likely to be many other stories about cathedrals, for this search we will use both the story and the author.
- Follow the same steps to get to the “MLA International Bibliography” database.
Second Search - Step 2

• Enter the title of the story in the first box, and choose “Subjects” in the drop-down menu to the right.
• Enter the author of the story in the second box, last name first.
• Choose “Primary Subject Author” in the drop-down menu to the right. Do NOT choose “Author” – that would be the critic.
• Click on “Search”.

Second Search - Step 3

• The results page should look like this.
• Use the same methods from the first search to tell which articles are available, how to get the full-text, and where to find them in the library.
Third Search

• The third search will be to find articles on John Updike’s story “A & P”.
• Since searching for “A & P” will find anything with those letters, for this search we will need to find one article on that story and use the database’s internal links.
• Follow the same steps to get to the “MLA International Bibliography” database.
• Search for John Updike as the “Primary Subject Author” since he wrote the story.
Third Search - Step 2

- The number of articles will be large (depending on another author, it could be easily more than this one).
- Search through the listed articles until one of them mentions “A & P”.
- Do NOT worry at this time whether the article is available. All that you need for this part is the citation page.
Third Search - Step 3

• You will notice that it took until page 3 before one of the articles mentioned the story we wanted, “A & P”.
• Depending on how well-studied your story is, you might find one on the first page, or have to skim many articles.
• On page 3, article #30 mentions “A & P”.
• Click on the title to get to the citation page.
Third Search - Step 4

- Look under “General Subject Areas” until you see a link for the story.
- Click on that link. It will change the search to find only articles about that story.
Third Search - Step 5

- Notice how the number of results is much more manageable, and all mention the story that you were searching for.

- Use the same methods from the first search to tell which articles are available, how to get the full-text, and where to find them in the library.
Actual results may vary.
Databases can sometimes crash.
Start your work early!