PsycINFO Exercise
PSYC 105 Library Research Session

Learning goals

Students will get oriented to the library databases that we use in psychology, most notably PsycINFO. They will learn some of the key search tools available in PsycINFO, and will be able to use that knowledge to increase the relevance of their search results.

Find articles

1. Go to PsycINFO via the Psychology Research Guide (go.middlebury.edu/psycguide).
2. Refer to the list of keywords you prepared for this session. Using the pre-requisite knowledge on the back of this page, search for peer-reviewed sources on your topic.
3. Review the first 2-3 pages of results. Based on the abstracts, try to identify one primary and one secondary source that might be useful for your final paper. Send the PsycINFO records to yourself with an APA-formatted citation. Then, be sure you can find the full text of the articles. Next, answer the questions below. (If you can't identify one useful source in the first 2-3 pages of results, revise your search until you can.)

Review and revise

1. What were your initial search terms? Write them here.

2. Look at the PsycINFO record for the article you found. List some words from the title, abstract, and subjects that you might use as additional search terms.

3. Revise your search in PsycINFO by adding some of the search terms you listed above. If you find any new terms, write them here.

Reflection and next steps

1. Reflect on the searches you’ve done so far. Did the revisions increase the relevancy of your results? Record your thoughts, then jot down some ideas about what you might do next.

2. Think about other databases or search engines that you’ve used. In what circumstances would you use PsycINFO, and why?
Pre-requisite knowledge

Different databases are useful for different purposes. PsycINFO is useful for psychology because it has literature and search tools that are unique to psychology. While other databases may contain some psychological literature, PsycINFO is designed for people doing research in this field.

PsycINFO search tools include filters and linked searches that help researchers increase the relevance of their search results.

*For example:*

- **Source Type**
- **Subject**
- **Age, Methodology, and other discipline-specific filters**
- **“Cited by” search**