How to Use Research Databases

Research databases are used to find reputable scholarly journals (most peer reviewed). These journals are written by experts in their fields and then reviewed by academic peers, therefore they are the most credible sources one can find. Databases are great for research paper sources.

There are a variety of databases available. Most require a paid subscription, however the school district provides students access with the Gale and EBSCO databases through their library media resources (found on school/district website).

How to Search on Research Databases

The layout, search features, and filters of each database vary. There are some general norms, however, that make searching more accurate and efficient. They are described below with examples.

- Search Operator
  - ➢ This is the "search bar" of the database where you place your keywords
  - ➢ It is NOT like google - you only put keywords NOT phrases/sentences
  - ➢ If I am researching the effect of dress code on student morale I would look up the keywords *dress code* and *morale*
- ""
  - ➢ Quotation marks indicate keywords that must be included in your search result
  - ➢ If I need *student morale* to be a phrase included in all my search results then I search *"student morale"*
    - ■ Be careful, by doing this as any relevant results that do not specifically use the phrase *"student morale"* will be eliminated from the search
- And
  - ➢ This feature is used to get results that must specifically include two phrases
  - ➢ This will limit your results because it will only show you articles/journals that include BOTH phrases
  - ➢ If I want results that include *"dress code"* AND *"student morale"* I search using AND
- Or

- ➢ This feature is used to get results that include one keyword OR another, OR both
- ➢ When compared with the AND feature it will increase your results as it shows you the articles for each keyword and the overlapping subjects
- ➢ If I search *dress code* OR *student morale* it will include articles just talking about dress code, others just about student morale, and others about both
- ● Not
  - ➢ This is used to exclude keywords
  - ➢ If I don't want anything about male dress code I can NOT male

- ● You can use combinations of these
  - ➢ If you say "dress code" NOT male it will show you dress code articles that do not contain the word "male"

How to Filter Results

In addition to the search strategies described above you can also use filters. You can request results from a specific timeframe (ex. Nov. 1998 - Dec 2006), author, print source (ex. Book, journal, peer-reviewed journal, magazine), and more.

When in doubt, consult your librarian!