

In the previous lesson we took a look at a good general, or multi-disciplinary database called Academic Search Complete. It's a great place to start looking for research on most topics, but since it doesn't specialize in any one subject it may not be the best tool to use if you want to explore the research in your area really deeply. The good news is that not all databases are multi-disciplinary – many specialize in areas such as chemistry, English literature or psychology. These may not be as large as Academic Search Complete, but you won't have to wade through hundreds or even thousands of results to find just the one area of research you're after.

Now the question is – where to begin? Let's start at the UBC Library homepage. If you click the indexes & databases tab here you won't be able to search for content. It's an A – Z index of the names of all the databases the Library has access to. So, you'll need to know the name of a specific database to get into it. Fortunately, there are already handy Library research guides available, right here in the Research Help portal that will help you decide which databases to use. Just click Research Help and then click on "research guides."

Notice how many topic areas there are to choose from. Choose the one that is closest to your area of interest. For example, you could try "Sociology" to look for research that sociologists have conducted on your topic or perhaps "Psychology" if you are interested in exploring that perspective.

Some of the categories have more than one research guide, such as "History." If you aren't sure which one to pick, just try whatever sounds the most general. For example, you could click on history again here.

Note, the guides have all been written by different subject librarians so they aren't exactly the same. To find the recommended database for your subject - Look up at the top here for a tab to "journal articles," "articles," or "databases." Some guides also list "key resources" on the front page, which may include key databases OR as in this case may link you to the contact information for your subject librarian.

One last tip: You may find that it's worthwhile checking more than one database. For example, here in the psychology guide you'll notice that the psychology database PsycINFO *and* the medicine database PubMed are both considered core databases - but assuredly contain research coming from different perspectives, journals and researchers.

Now all you have left to do is Click on the name of database that you wish to use. Then, click the green button on the following page to connect. If you're off campus you'll be asked to login with your CWL first and then your database will open for you to jump right into your research!

As ever, if you need any help with this you can contact a librarian or check out one of the helpful guides in the Research Help portal.