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MLA: How to Search It on the Web

I. MLA: Searching It On the Web

NOTE: You must be connected to Stetson's Network in order to access any of the Library's subscription databases (MLA is a subscription database). If you are not working from a campus-connected computer, you will have to enter the network through a proxy server. See Instructions for Library Access from Off Campus:
<http://stetson.edu/library/offcampus.php>.

The **Modern Language Association International Bibliography (MLA)** is an index to journal articles, books, and more published on modern languages, literatures, folklore, film, and linguistics. In 2000, the database began coverage on the history, theory, practice of teaching language, literature, and rhetoric and composition at the college level, including professional and administrative issues. Works may address the teaching of any modern language and any literature; those on rhetoric and composition may address discourse studies and the teaching and learning of written communication in any language.

The database, published by the Modern Language Association, covers 1926 to the present.

The index includes scholarly research in more than 4,000 journals and series, relevant monographs, working papers, proceedings, bibliographies, and other formats.

Go to the Library's Full-Text Databases and Indexes page:

<http://stetson.edu/library/databases.php>.

In the alphabetical listing of all databases, click on MLA (Language and Literature)

To find a list of the journals indexed in MLA, click on "MLA Directory of Periodicals" located along the top of the search screen. The *Directory* provides addresses, advertising rates, and information about submission for publication. This option provides directory information ONLY. It does not provide information about individual articles within the periodicals.

II. Searching

If you need help on how to use Boolean operators and other aspects of searching electronic databases, go to <http://www2.stetson.edu/library/researchguide.pdf>,
Step Two: Searching Electronic Databases.

For additional help, click on the HELP button on the search screen.

Basic Search

- In the first box, type the word or phrase you wish to find
- You may combine terms using the **Boolean (logical) operators: and, or, not**
Examples: Milton and women allegory or allegorical
female protagonists and French literature
african american literature not harlem renaissance
- You can use the **truncation symbol, the asterisk ***, to find plurals and all variations of a word. Example: female* will find female or females, female characters, female protagonists, female figures, etc.
- The **wildcard symbol, the question mark ?**, should be used within words. To use the wildcard, enter your search terms and replace each unknown character with a ?. MLA finds all citations of that word with the ? replaced by a letter. Example: ne?t will find neat, nest, or next. It will not find net because the wildcard replaces a single character.
- Searches are **NOT case sensitive**. You can type your term(s) in upper case, lower case, or a combination of the two.

Advanced Searching

- **Field Searches** --You may designate if you want to search anywhere in the record (Select a Field (optional)), only the title, only the author, only the subject, etc., by changing the default fields.
- Once you have executed a search, MLA suggests **subject terms along the left-hand side** of the results which you can AND with your original search to focus your search more. Just click on the term you want to AND into your search and the new search will automatically be executed.
- You can also limit your results to the **Source Type** (journal articles, book articles, dissertations, etc.) by clicking on a specific type in the left-hand side bar.
- **Thesaurus**--You can search for a term or phrase using the Thesaurus. The Thesaurus searches for terms ONLY in the Subject Terms field of the record. Click on "Thesaurus" along the top of the screen. The Thesaurus indicates the official vocabulary assigned to classify the items in the database. For example, if

you look up "females" in the Thesaurus, you will see that it is NOT used as a subject term. If you look up "women," you will see that it IS used as a subject term.

In the "Browse" box, type in the term or phrase. Click on "Browse"
If the term or phrase is listed, check the box to the left of the term, then click on "Search."

You may check more than one term before clicking on "Add."
If more than one term is checked, the terms will automatically be ORed together in the search. You can change the OR to AND or NOT by choosing a different option from the drop-down menu next to ADD.

Checking to see if a word is listed in the Thesaurus can often be a means of focusing your search better. For example, if one looks up "Metaphor" in the Thesaurus, one sees that there are several more specific terms that can be used such as "metaphor analysis," "metaphor comprehension," "metaphor interpretation," "metaphor production," and more.

- You may **combine previous searches** by clicking on the "Search History/Alerts."

Check the searches you wish to combine and check the Boolean (logical) operator you wish to use to combine them ("and," "or," "not"). Click on "Add."

Or type "s" (without the quotation marks) and the search number in the first search box.

You can use Boolean operators to combine previous searches or use previous searches with new terms. Examples: s3 AND s14; s5 OR s7; s2 and meter

- **To search for articles by an author** (remember, this search will be for the author of an article or book, probably NOT the author you are researching).

You can restrict your search to the author field by typing in the author's name (last name first) in the search box.

Change the **field to "Author"**

Click on "Search"

Or

If you are uncertain of how an author's name is spelled, or how he/she might have listed it on a particular publication (using a middle initial, for example, or not), click on the **down arrow next to More at the top of the page**. Then next to Browse an Index, select Author.

Type the author's name (as close as you know to the correct spelling), last name first, on the "Browse for" line.

Click on "Browse."

Check the box beside the name of the author you seek, and click "Search."

You can check the boxes next to more than one name if you wish.

- **To search for materials about an author**

In the search box, simply type in the person's name (first name first), and click on "Search."

Or

Click on "Names as Subjects" across the top of the screen.

On the "Browse for" line, type in the name of the author (last name first).

Click on "Browse."

Check the box to the left of the author you want.

Click on "Search."

- **Other Limiters**

You can choose to limit your search by language, date, publication type, and other ways by scrolling down to "Limit Your Results" and typing in your choice(s).
NOTE: It is NOT recommended that you limit to Local Titles since that option will miss the thousands of journal titles available full text in any of the Library's databases.

- **Apply Related Words**—expands your search by including synonyms and plurals of your term

III. Showing, Adding, and Printing/Saving/Emailing Records

Showing Records

To see the full record of an item, click on the underlined title in the result list.

In the record, you may also click on anything that is in blue and underlined to link to other materials by that author or from that source or with that subject heading.

To print those articles that are available full text, click on the link to the full text either in html or pdf format. **Remember** that pdf format preserves the original pagination so that it is easier for you to cite a passage from the original.

If the record has a link to "**Check Stetson Holdings**," click on that link which automatically searches **Stetson's Journals List** to see if we own the journal either in print (on the shelves in the Library) or have access to it electronically in another database. If the Journals List shows that we have that journal available electronically in another database, click on the name of the database and follow the links to the specific article you want. If the Journals List shows 0 results, then you will have to put in a request for an interlibrary loan (see Section V below) to get the article.

You can check the **Library's Journals List** at any time by going to the Library's home page (<http://www2.stetson.edu/library/>) and clicking on Journals List.

If the result you got by searching MLA indicates a chapter in a book, then check **Stetson's catalog (WebCat)** to see if we own the book.

Adding/Marking Records

Mark records by clicking on "Add to Folder." To un-mark, simply click on "Remove from folder."

Printing/Saving/E-Mailing/Exporting

To print what is showing on the screen, click on your browser's "Print" button or file, print command.

To print, email, or save the full text of an article that is linked to full text, click on the links to the full text.

If the full text is in **html format**, click on MLA's "Print" or your browser's print button to print it. Click on "Email" or "Save" to email it or save it to a disk.

If the text is in **pdf format**, click on the printer icon along the top of the pdf screen (Adobe Acrobat screen). Do not use your browser's printer icon or file, print command. To save a .pdf file, click on the disk icon along the top of the pdf screen (Adobe Acrobat screen) and follow the prompts.

To print, email, save, or export a list of articles in your folder, click on the "Folder View" phrase or on "Folder" at the very top of the screen. Once you have clicked on Folder View, you have the option of printing, emailing, downloading to a disk, or exporting to bibliographic management software (such as ProCite or EndNotes) the results you have marked.

Note that for items with attached full text, if you choose "print" from your folder, only the citation will print. You must click on the link to the full text for each article to print the full text. Likewise, when you download from your folder, the citation and a link to the full text will download, but not the text itself.

The full text will be attached to an email.

V. Getting the Article or Book

If the citation in the Result List has a link to full text, click on that link.

If the record has a link to "**Check Stetson Holdings,**" click on that link which automatically searches **Stetson's Journals List** to see if we own the journal either in print (on the shelves in the Library) or have access to it electronically in another database.

If the Journals List shows that we have that journal available electronically in another database, click on the name of the database and follow the links to the specific article you want.

If the Journals List shows we own the issue of the journal you need in paper format (print), you will need to find the periodical in the Library. Periodicals in the Library are arranged alphabetically by the title of the journal. Check where to find periodicals in the Library by going to the map of the Library at http://stetson.edu/library/maps_librarymap.pdf.

You can check the Library's Journals List at any time by going to the Library's home page (<http://www2.stetson.edu/library/>) and clicking on Journals List.

If Stetson does not own the journal or have access to it full text through one of our databases, then you will need to submit an Interlibrary Loan Request by going to http://stetson.edu/library/departments_ill.php.

If the item is a book: You will need to check the Library's Catalog (WebCat) <http://cat.stetson.edu/> to see if we own the book. Check where to find books in the Library by going to the map of the Library at http://stetson.edu/library/maps_librarymap.pdf.

If Stetson does not own the book, you may submit an Interlibrary Loan Request for it by going to http://stetson.edu/library/departments_ill.php.

VI. Citing Sources

Plagiarism

A basic characteristic of scholarly work is citing the sources used or referred to or borrowed from. It is academic dishonesty to use ideas from (even if you put them in different words), paraphrase, or quote from someone else's work without acknowledging the other source.

If you use someone else's work—their words, ideas, art work, music, Web pages, software, or some other expression—you must acknowledge the author or creator. Failure to do so is an unethical practice called plagiarism. Stetson has an official policy regarding plagiarism in the Student Code of Conduct.

For more information on plagiarism and how to avoid it, go to the following sites:

https://my.hamilton.edu/academics/resource/wc/Using_Sources.PDF
<http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>
<http://plagiarism.umf.maine.edu/>
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/>

Style Manuals

To avoid plagiarism, writers, musicians, web page designers, and others need to acknowledge where they got their ideas, quotes, music, or images. There are conventional forms of acknowledging that you have used someone else's work. There are different forms of citation for many academic disciplines. In other words, each discipline has its own preferred way of citing sources. Many disciplines have published their preferred citation conventions in what is called a **style manual or style guide**.

In citing any source (book, journal article, government document, Web site, whatever), be sure you have the following relevant elements for your notes and bibliography or works cited page:

1. Author. This may be an individual person, a government agency, a department within a larger entity (for example, the Sociology Department at a university), or a business.
2. Title of the journal article, newspaper article, chapter from a book, government document, or Web site AND title of the journal, newspaper, or book
3. Name of electronic database (if the article was retrieved through a database on the Web)
4. URL to Web site
5. Date of publication or date last visited on the Web
6. Volume number and issue number if the material is from a magazine, newspaper, or scholarly journal
7. Pages of the journal article or book

If what you need to cite does not fall into any of these categories, check with your professor as to what information you will need to properly acknowledge the source.

The standard style manual for languages is the ***MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* by Joseph Gibaldi, Ready Ref. LB 2369 .G53**—Kept in Ready Reference directly behind the Reference Desk.

Links to other help sheets on citation format are available at the following:

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/15/>

<http://lib.trinity.edu/research/citing/index.shtml>

<http://www.library.upenn.edu/cgi-bin/res/sr.cgi?fof=World&resourcetype=35>

<http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/online/citex.html>