

How to select an article in a database. Just as with any research process, you have to select the sources that are the most relevant to your topic. And that meet the criteria set by your instructor. For example, if your instructor has indicated that you need to use scholarly journals, you need to be sure that you aren't using articles from magazines or newspapers. Most of the databases allow you to limit to scholarly journals. ProQuest Central is a good example of this. You can limit to scholarly journals so you will know that your results should be from articles in scholarly journals only. But even if you have limited your search to these publications, you still need to find articles that are most relevant to your topic. Begin by examining the title. Keep in mind that scholarly articles are almost always very specific. You won't find an article that gives a really broad overview of the topic. These articles focus on a specific aspect of a topic. So don't get discouraged if the article title doesn't align perfectly with your broad topic. Think about what information it can add to your research paper. Perhaps it can provide you with research on an aspect of the topic you don't know much about. Next, read the abstract. This is a summary of the article. It will give you a good sense of the content of the article. Next, look at the keywords, or "subject terms" associated with the article. Often this is a good indicator of what the article is about. It will also help you in brainstorming about other keywords you might use in your search. If you have any questions, please use the "get help" section of our library website.