Finding Secondary Sources
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1. **Introduction and instructions**

As a history student you will rely heavily on the resources provided by the Library, both print and electronic, and this booklet aims to ensure that you know how and where to find appropriate secondary sources.

This booklet will focus on:

- how to plan your search for information
- searching electronic journals
- using a bibliographic database

**Where to find help**

If you need help at any time during your course, you can:

- ask at the main desk in the Library
- email: lib-enquiry@york.ac.uk
- contact the Academic Liaison Librarian for History, Kirsty Whitehead (lib-history@york.ac.uk).

The Library’s website is the main source of information about the Library, its resources and all of the services it provides. You will find tips for using the Library, contact details, information about history resources, and guides to using our collections and electronic resources:
http://www.york.ac.uk/library/

The IT Services website contains information about how to use the campus computing, printing and copying facilities as well as training material on using different software:
http://www.york.ac.uk/it-services/

**Tips for reading texts online**

You will find that an increasing number of the texts which you are required to read are online. Whilst this is good news for improving access to resources, we understand that reading long texts online does not suit everyone.

There is a useful website which gives you tips on reading on-screen and might help to make your studies easier. In particular, have a look at the Quick Guide which you can download – the link is on the right-hand side of the page:
http://readingonscreen.wordpress.com/
2. Planning your search for information

2.1 Why it helps to plan in advance

Planning how you will search before you start will help to ensure that you find the key material for your topic. It will improve the quality of the results you find and it can save you a lot of time. There are simple techniques which can be applied to any research tool and these are particularly helpful when searching large bibliographic resources, like the Bibliography of British and Irish History.

2.2 Tips for searching

Sample topic: The historical importance of the chocolate industry in York

1. Think of keywords relating to your topic and think of possible synonyms for your search terms. Also think of the wider historical context of the topic, key figures involved or key events which may provide other aspects to search.

2. Use a truncation symbol (often *) to search for the variant endings of a word stem. e.g. histor* finds history, histories, historical.

3. Use a wildcard symbol (often ?) to replace any single letter within a word to search for variant spellings or words. e.g. wom?n finds woman or women.

4. Combine your search terms using the words OR / AND. 
   AND finds references which contain both words e.g. chocolate AND rowntree’s This makes your search narrower.
   OR finds references which contain either word e.g. chocolate OR cocoa This makes your search broader.

5. Use quotation marks to search for phrases. Some resources will search automatically for phrases without quotation marks. e.g. “chocolate manufacturers”.

Example search terms for this topic:

- chocolate
- cocoa
- sweets
- confection?ry
- industry
- manufactur*
- Terry*
- Rowntree*
- Nestlé
- York
- Yorkshire
- Quaker*
- Victorian
3. **Accessing online resources**

The University Library subscribes to a large number of online resources which can be accessed on or off-campus. All of the Library’s electronic resources can be accessed via the E-resources Guide or the Subject Guides.

3.1 **Using the E-resources Guide**

The E-resources Guide is the most direct way to access e-resources when you know which specific resources you want to use.

1. To open the E-resources Guide from your personal student home page click on the link to the Library website, then the link to Subject Guides in the left-hand menu, then the E-resources Guide tab at the top of the page.

   You can also go directly to [http://subjectguides.york.ac.uk/e-resources](http://subjectguides.york.ac.uk/e-resources)

2. Use the tabs at the top of the guide to go to alphabetical lists of resources if you know the title of the resource you are looking for.

3. Alternatively, use the Subject drop-down menu to select History. A list of electronic resources of particular relevance to History students will then open. Remember that you may need to look at resources listed under other subject areas as well. You can also use the Category drop-down menu for more general sections such as Reference or Newspapers.

4. To find out more about a particular resource, click on the information symbol next to the title, or where available, open the online guide by clicking the button.

5. To open a resource, click on the title. In some cases, you will be asked to enter your IT Services username and password.

3.2 **Using the Subject Guides**

For more detailed information about the e-resources, and to explore what is available, you should look at the Subject Guide for History ([http://subjectguides.york.ac.uk/history](http://subjectguides.york.ac.uk/history) or find the link on the left of the Library homepage).

In the Subject Guide you will find information on:

- Resources for finding books and journal articles including e-book collections, e-journal archives, online bibliographic databases for abstracts and indexes
- Resources for the medieval, early modern, eighteenth century and modern periods
- General reference resources, newspapers, official publications and historical legislation
4. Searching electronic journals: key resources

4.1 JSTOR

You will find that many of the articles you are asked to read are available electronically on a site called JSTOR. JSTOR is an online archive that provides access to the complete text of journals across a wide range of subjects. An advantage of JSTOR is that you can search by keyword within an individual title or across the entire collection of journals for articles on a particular subject.

4.2 Project MUSE

Like JSTOR, Project MUSE is an online archive which allows you to search across the full text of a large collection of journals. You will find that some articles are available in both archives. However, in general, Project MUSE has a stronger American bias in terms of the journals it includes. It also contains more recent articles than JSTOR.

4.3 Periodicals Archive Online

As an alternative to JSTOR and Project MUSE, you can use Periodicals Archive Online. It also provides access to the full text of journals but the range of journals available to search is much smaller than in the other collections.

Online guides to searching these resources are available next to their entries on the E-resources Guide or Subject Guide. Click on the button to open the guide.
5. Using bibliographic databases

5.1 What is a bibliographic resource?

A bibliographic resource is generally a database or list of references to books, journal articles and book chapters, sometimes in a specific subject area. Some bibliographic resources focus on particular time periods or countries whilst others are more general. Some may include an abstract or summary of the material. An example of a general bibliographic database is the Web of Science which includes the arts, humanities and social sciences as well as science material. This is a good resource to use for interdisciplinary topics.

Remember:

- No single resource covers every journal and book that may be of interest to historians, so it is important that you use more than one bibliographic resource in your search for material.
- A bibliographic database does not search across the full-text of a journal in the same way that an e-journal archive like JSTOR or Project MUSE or Periodicals Archive Online does. Instead it searches across authors, titles, and sometimes abstracts (summaries) of many more journals than are included within e-journal archives. For the best results you should use a mixture of resources like JSTOR and the online bibliographic databases for your research.

5.2 Bibliography of British and Irish History

The main bibliographic database specifically for history available at York is the Bibliography of British and Irish History.

The Bibliography of British and Irish History contains references to journal articles and chapters in books dealing with the British Isles, and with the British Empire and Commonwealth, during all periods for which written documentation is available - from 55BC to the present.

An online guide to searching this resource is available next to the entry for the Bibliography of British and Irish History on the E-resources Guide or Subject Guide. Click on the button to open the guide.

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