Quality Sources

Not all sources of information are the same. When conducting research you want to use sources that are trustworthy and well-written. These will help you build your own argument.

Wikipedia may be useful for day-to-day research but NEVER use it as a reference in your assignment. You do not know who has written it or whether it is accurate. Reference peer-reviewed books and articles. Instead.

Peer-Reviewed Content

Peer-reviewed or “scholarly” journals are reviewed and scrutinised by a panel of experts before they are published. This means they are highly respected and trustworthy.

The purpose of peer-reviewed journals is to advance the ongoing research in a specialist field of study.

As a result they are often written in highly technical language which may be difficult to read but persevere. The more you read the better you will become at reading academic papers.

How can I access full text?

If you use an internet search engine you may come across links to articles that sound useful but you cannot access.

Behind the Paywall

Your search may lead you to an online article or newspaper that requires you to purchase access. These are “behind a paywall”.

Check if available in the Library

Depending on what it is we may already have access to the article in the Library. Check the library to see if we have access to it.

Note: You can access the full text of every resource available in the Library. Searching the library first will save you time.

Open Access

Academics want you to read their work and often use open access publishing to make their work accessible for free.

Open Access publishing is scholarly work that is accessible digitally which the authors have made available for FREE

If you hit a paywall it may be worth searching and seeing if the article is available open access.
WHERE TO START?

**Google**

www.google.co.uk

Google is great for everyday research but poor at finding peer-reviewed content.

A lot of results may be low quality information (e.g. blogs, social media etc.)

**Google Scholar**

scholar.google.co.uk

Google Scholar is designed for academic research and will search the internet for academic, peer-reviewed articles, books and conference papers.

As Google Scholar searches the entire web you will find that some results will be "behind the paywall" and therefore not accessible.

**Changing Your Google Scholar Settings**

To get direct links to results that are available via Pearson College Library you will need to change your Google Scholar settings.

1. Go to scholar.google.com
2. Go to Settings
3. Go to Library Links and search for "Pearson College London". Select and Save.

Results available in the Library will be displayed as a hyperlinked Full Text available in PCL.

**Library Search**

lib-guides.pearsoncollegelondon.ac.uk/search

Library Search will searches across several of the library databases as well as 20 million open access resources.

It has more tools for narrowing your search than Google or Google Scholar.

**Note:** Not everything in the Library can be found using the Library Search tool. Some types of information (e.g. statistics, legal information) are not indexed in the same way and will not appear in your results.

To find statistics or legal information go directly to Statista or Westlaw.

**Specific Library Database**

lib-guides.pearsoncollegelondon.ac.uk/az.php

Sometimes you may need to go directly to a specialist library database instead of using the Library Search tool.

- You may want to use bespoke tools that are available in the database and will help you find information.
- The type of information you are after cannot be discovered using the Library Search tool.

For instance use Westlaw for finding legal information.

**Reading List**

Your reading list may offer some useful suggestions on where to start. Explore the recommended reading. The recommended reading may lead you to other resources. Check the references.

**Textbook**

For some subjects a textbook may be a good starting point. Look at the references for suggestions as to further reading. You may be able to find articles or books that are referenced in the Library.
Comparison Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Google</th>
<th>Google Scholar</th>
<th>Library Search</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ease-of-use</strong></td>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tools</strong></td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
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| **Pros**             | • Good for everyday research  
|                      | • Designed for academic research  
|                      | • Can be set up to show results available via Library  
|                      | • Includes links to Open Access full text  |
| **Cons**             | • Not great for academic research  
|                      | • Results will include links to stuff you cannot access  |
|                      | • Designed for academic research  
|                      | • Includes links to Open Access full text  |

Search Strategies

- Start with a simple search term (e.g., “tesco”) and then add search terms (e.g., “tesco online shopping”) to narrow down your results.
- Try using SYNONYMS (similar words) and see if you get different results e.g., “online retail” instead of “online shopping”.
- Think about the words that the author might use. The authors may use academic terms rather than everyday phrases.
- Drawing a mindmap may help you think about different search terms you could use.
- If you find a book or an article that is very relevant to your research check if it contains any terms that you can re-use. An abstract may contain KEYWORDS. Check the references and see if there are any other books or articles that look relevant to your research.
- If you using Library Search look your results are tagged with hyper-linked SUBJECT TERMS that will link through to similar content.

Referencing

Remember to reference all of the sources you use in your work. Your work should cite the work in the body of the text (Wares 2019) and include a List of References at the end using the Harvard Referencing style.

Further Help & Guidance

You can find lots more help on how to find information for your research on the Library website lib-guides.pearsoncollegelondon.ac.uk

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