Introduction to literature search for students of English Linguistics and Literature

Fall semester 2015
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1 Introduction and search strategy

Time and again you will be looking for the necessary literary resources when preparing a presentation or writing an essay during your studies, your further education or even your professional life. Today, there is a broad variety of information sources available. This document provides guidelines to help you keep track of the vast amount of different media and information sources and to find practical and efficient strategies that will lead you to the sources and books needed. Looking for already known titles is usually easy: With the help of bibliographies and lists of references, you can jump from one bibliography to the next to find relevant literature with little effort. That may, however, only present you with a limited number of recurring titles. Searching for topics, by contrast, is much more demanding but tends to result in a much wider variety of results. To do a topic-based search, a systematic approach is advisable:

The four steps of literature search

1.1 Before you start

Allow enough time to prepare for your search. Your inquiry for information will be most efficient if you consider the three following questions before you start:

*What are you looking for?*

First of all, determine your topic (according to your assessment question) and the aim of your search. Think about possible terms that represent your topic and write them down. Do not forget to consider synonyms or related expressions as well. Use dictionaries, reference books or thesauri for your field for clarification (you may generate word lists by using keyword lists (= thesauri); see [www.zb.uzh.ch →Subjects →Englische Philologie →Datenbanken](http://www.zb.uzh.ch)).
**What do you need your literature for?**
Consider the extent of your search. Do you only need a few references or does your research need to be exhaustive? Bear in mind that it is especially your assignment question and the time available that determine the scope of your search.

**Where are you searching?**
Decide which information source you want to start your search with and what other discovery services you want to consult in a further step (e.g. reference works (print / online), online library catalogues, subject databases, specialist portals, other internet services such as search engines). Your choice of information source depends on the intended depth of your search and on what kind of material you are looking for (e.g. books, articles, images...). If books are sufficient for your assignment/topic, it may be enough to simply use the library catalogue for your search. If you also wish to include journal articles, you must also consult subject databases.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Depth of search</strong></th>
<th><strong>Exhaustive search</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Basic search</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>– Reference works (print / online): lexica, dictionaries, encyclopaedias</td>
<td>– Subject databases (bibliographic databases, full-text databases, factual databases, multimedia databases)</td>
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<tr>
<td>– Handbooks (print / online)</td>
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<td>– Library catalogues</td>
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<td>– Evaluation of bibliographies</td>
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It is vital that you consult all information sources that are relevant for your topic.

**1.2 Executing your search**

Define your **search language** (English, German, ...). When conducting your search with the help of keywords, the choice of adequate search terms is crucial. Use **search aids** such as Boolean operators, wildcards, sort by relevance or date or filters to narrow down your search. Consult the help section of the respective information resources to find out which of these aids can be applied.

**Search strategies**

**Keyword search or index search?** A keyword search allows you to freely search for terms within the entire bibliographic record (“all items”) or within certain categories (e.g. “in the title”, “as creator”, “in subject” etc.). By using Boolean operators you can combine or exclude terms, while terms can be cut short with the help of truncating (see below). The index search (browse) enables you to search within an alphabetic list. This can be particularly helpful when specifically searching for authors, (journal) titles or subject headings (or descriptors).

**Boolean operators:** two or more keywords can be combined with the operators **AND** (intersecting set), **OR** (set union) or **NOT** (difference quantity).
Example:

**Shakespeare AND Drama**

**Phrase search:** Search for keywords in a predetermined, exact order. Usually expressed by quotation marks “...”.

Example:

**“Gothic novel”**

Also consider that especially in German, phrases can occur in inflected forms (“englischen Sprache”).

**Truncation:** Word stem search with the help of a particular symbol (wildcard) added at the end of a word, e.g. *, ?, $, ! or #. Consult the help section of the respective information resource to find out which of these symbols can be used.

Example:

**litera***

This entry will produce search results including the words literature, literary, Literatur and Literaturwissenschaft etc. (cf. "englische* Sprache").

**Filtering** or **Limiting:** Search results can be refined by filtering the results with the help of specific criteria such as holding library, creation date, language, topic etc.

**Other search functionalities**

New search engine technologies in library catalogues and databases make literature searching easier and more comprehensible for its users. However, the reduced transparency of how search results are generated is a drawback not to be underestimated: the more powerful the search engine technology one uses, the less traceable and transparent the search results will be.

Possible search functionalities are:

**Stemming:** If a keyword is entered in the singular, the search engine also generates results containing its plural form (or the other way around). Or: stemmed searches allow the user to find different inflected forms of a keyword by simply entering the respective keyword (e.g. generate → generated, generating...). Similar: Fault tolerance (typing errors are recognised as such and may be automatically corrected (or ignored) by the search engine).

**Decomposition of compound words:** Entering the keyword “Ungarnaufstand” will also generate search results containing “Aufstand in Ungarn”. As it can generate very inaccurate or pointless results (especially in German), the option of decomposing compound words is rarely used in search engine technologies (consider, for example, “Weltkrieg” or “Mitteleuropa”).
**Multilingualism:** German terms can be linked to their English equivalents. As this technology involves extremely extensive maintenance of the vocabulary used, it is still rarely in use although it could prove to be highly efficient and very practical.

**Ranking:** Hit lists are often sorted by relevance. This weighting, however, can be problematic as the criteria used by search engines are often not disclosed to their users.

**Clustering:** The presentation of the resulting hits of a search arranged according to content, often represented neatly (tree structures, folders etc.). More and more often, however, the usefulness of a database depends on its structure.

**Search history:** Many databases offer the possibility of saving one’s search request through a search history. This can help to re-evaluate the search strategy applied. Furthermore, earlier search steps can be re-used for a new search or combined anew.

1.3 Evaluation of results

**Too few results?** Also consider synonyms or use other search terms. Generalise your assignment question a little or use broader search terms. Change to another database. However, do not give up too quickly: thinking outside the box might also help sometimes.

**Too many results?** Reformulate your assignment question and/or further narrow down your topic if possible. Search by using keywords that express your topic more precisely. You may find consulting the thematic subject index (thesaurus) helpful to find suitable keywords.

**Quality evaluation:** A critical evaluation of the quality and reliability of the literature found is crucial for the writing of academic essays. A subject database is, of course, a much more reliable source for information than the freely accessible internet. Nonetheless, an individual evaluation of content is necessary in any case.

1.4 Further steps: saving your results

Do not forget to print, save (on your own hard-drive or on a USB-stick) or e-mail to yourself the references that you have found. Bibliographical references can often be transferred to a literature administration programme directly (e.g. Citavi, Endnote...).

Many databases, library catalogues or electronic journal portals offer so-called Literature Alerts that users can subscribe to. This means that (if you are registered) you can save search inquiries and will automatically be notified via e-mail or RSS as soon as new documents come in that match your previous inquiry. This guarantees that you remain up to date in your research area.
2 Important libraries (a selection)

Libraries do not only offer a large collection of academic books and journals but also very extensive digital resources that are constantly expanded. These digital resources are mostly not freely available online. In academic libraries, you will usually find typical reference books such as encyclopaedias, lexica, dictionaries, handbooks and so forth. These usually serve as a good starting point for initial orientation in a subject area as they provide compact, helpful information.

2.1 Zentralbibliothek Zürich – canton, city and university library

The Zentralbibliothek holds a large number of books, journals and electronic media as well as special collections for prints and drawings, manuscripts, maps, music and rare and old prints. It addresses itself to the general public while at the same time serving the needs of teaching and research at the University of Zurich. The collection focuses on *Turicensia* (publications from/about Zurich) and on the Humanities and Social Sciences. The loan of media is free of charge.

Zähringerplatz 6, 8001 Zürich

www.zb.uzh.ch
www.facebook.com/Zentralbibliothek.Zuerich
http://twitter.com/#!/ZBZuerich
www.delicious.com/zentralbibliothek

2.2 English Department Library, University of Zurich

The English Department Library is an open stack library with approximately 60,000 books as well as numerous journals, audio books and films. All library holdings are recorded in an online catalogue (Rechercheportal). A valid library card is necessary to borrow books from the library. The study desks in the reading room are primarily reserved for students of the English Department. Personal study desks and lockers are available for students preparing for their final exams. Wireless network is provided throughout the library, photocopying machines are also available.

Pestalozzistrasse 50, 8032 Zürich

http://www.es.uzh.ch/Library.html

2.3 Other department libraries of the University of Zurich

2.4 James Joyce Foundation

The Zurich James Joyce Foundation was established in 1985 with a view to keeping alive the memory and work of the Irish writer James Joyce. Its library consists of Joyce’s works in various languages and editions as well as a large stock of background literature and various artefacts. The Foundation is open from 10 to 5 p.m. from Monday to Friday and by appointment.

Im Strauhof, Augustinergasse 9, 8001 Zürich
http://www.joycefoundation.ch/site/

2.5 Museumsgesellschaft and Literaturhaus Zürich

The library of the Literaturhaus Zürich holds numerous newspapers and journals as well as German, French, English and Italian fiction and general non-fiction. The loan of media is free of charge for registered students of the University of Zurich. The use of reading rooms and internet access (free) are restricted to members of the Museumsgesellschaft.

Limmatquai 62, 8001 Zürich
http://www.literaturhaus.ch/

2.6 ETH-Library

The ETH library is the central university library of the ETH Zurich specialising in engineering, natural sciences, architecture, mathematics, sports and military sciences. It houses special collections for images, topographical as well as thematic maps, rare prints, manuscripts and personal papers (estates) as well as the administrative archives of the ETH Zurich.

Rämistrasse 101, 8092 Zürich
www.ethbib.ethz.ch

3 Internet and Deep Web

Frequently, a search begins with a glance at the internet. It is certainly reasonable to use search engines such as Google or Yahoo to get to Wikipedia-articles or the like. However, the results from these sources must be critically analysed if your aim is to conduct an extensive and qualified academic search. You will hardly be able to filter scientifically valid information out of the vastness of sources available via Google or other general websites. It is much more likely that you may not find any at all: the contents of the so-called Deep Web – e.g. the contents of academic journals or holdings of library catalogues – usually remain undiscovered. Search engines such as Google Scholar, OAIster or DOAR can fill this gap to a certain extent and can be useful to find articles in open access journals. Nevertheless, such a search cannot reach the depth and extent of a search in subject databases or similar resources.
It is also highly recommended that you consult selected websites of academic institutions that generally offer further specialised search engines and web directories. Considering the ever-increasing flood of information on the internet and the changing general framework for search and publishing behaviour of academics, specialist portals or virtual subject libraries have become increasingly important. These tools collate scientifically relevant information under one unified surface (see 3.5).

### 3.1 Access to licensed sources

You can gain access to subject data, electronic journals and newspapers, specialist portals, e-books as well as further information on databases on the websites of both Zentralbibliothek Zürich and the English Department Library:

- [http://www.es.uzh.ch/Library/Catalogs.html](http://www.es.uzh.ch/Library/Catalogs.html)

Electronic journals and databases are licensed for members of the University of Zurich – i.e. the university network – and thus are only accessible within the University of Zurich or the Zentralbibliothek. However, members of the university (faculty members as well as students) have the possibility to use electronic resources outside the university network as well. You can gain access either via **VPN-Tunnel**, Proxy-Server or EZproxy. More information on this is available on the website of the university's IT-services: [http://www.id.uzh.ch/dl/mobil/zugaenge.html](http://www.id.uzh.ch/dl/mobil/zugaenge.html)

The following symbols provide information on the accessibility of the respective online-source:

- ☑ freely available on the internet
- ☑ access only possible within the network of either university or ZB (VPN)

### 3.2 Important library catalogues

Library catalogues list all media available in one or several libraries (e.g. books, journals, electronic media). Usually, you will only find literature published independently, this means no articles from journals or newspapers, composite volumes or anthologies. Library catalogues also give information on availability, location (of literature) and circulation rules (loan, non-lending collections etc.). Library catalogues are freely available online. However, their contents are not subscripted by search engines, so you will not find holdings of library catalogues by googling them, for example.

**Rechercheportal (NEBIS-Verbund)**

The Network of Libraries and Information Centers (Netzwerk von Bibliotheken und Informationsstellen, NEBIS), more than 180 university libraries as well as libraries of colleges of higher education and other research institutes are united. Members: the Zentralbibliothek Zürich, the libraries of the University of Zurich, the libraries of the ETH, the Swiss Social Archive (Schweizerisches Sozialarchiv) and many college libraries. Their holdings are searchable online in the Rechercheportal ([www.recherche-portal.ch](http://www.recherche-portal.ch)). A complete list of all participating libraries of NEBIS is available here: [www.nebis.ch/bibliotheken.html](http://www.nebis.ch/bibliotheken.html).
Swissbib

Via Swissbib, all holdings of Swiss university libraries (including the library networks IDS, RERO and SBT), as well as the holdings of the Swiss National Library can be jointly searched. Swissbib also includes the title data of all academic works listed in ZORA, the document server of the University of Zurich. At the moment, Swissbib contains over 15 million titles from more than 730 libraries (www.swissbib.ch).

KVK – Karlsruhe Virtual Catalog

KVK (Karlsruher Virtueller Katalog) is a metacatalogue that offers a combined search of holdings of Swiss, German, Austrian and other international libraries as well as book trade catalogues. In total, more than 500 million books and journals worldwide are listed. (www.ubka.uni-karlsruhe.de/kvk.html).

3.3 Subject databases (a selection)

Subject databases offer exhaustive information on existing literature for a specific subject regardless of the holdings of individual libraries. In addition to books, dissertations and so on, they contain information on literature published dependently, e.g. articles from journals, composite volumes or anthologies. As most of these databases are licensed, they can only be accessed within either UZH or ZB network (or via VPN). According to their content (texts, images, graphics, facts etc.), databases can be classified as bibliographic subject databases (only offering information on author, title, source, abstracts; frequently SFX-link to full text is also provided), full-text databases (databases with text collections, e.g. journals, newspapers, reference books, editions, sources), multimedia databases or factual databases.

A complete list of all available databases is presented on the ZB English Language and Literature subject page: www.zb.uzh.ch/recherche/fachgebiete/englische-philologie/index.html.de → Datenbanken.

Oxford English Dictionary (OED)

– Historical dictionary of the English language
– Quarterly updated version of the original 20-volume print version including the 3-volume “Additions Series”
– Provides description, history and pronunciation information on over 600,000 words (past and present), also contains more than 3 million literary quotations
– Website: http://www.oed.com/

Oxford Reference Online

– Collection of general as well as subject-specific dictionaries and lexica
– Provides access to The Oxford Companion to English Literature and many more
– Website: http://www.oxfordreference.com/

Early English Books Online

– Database with more than 125,000 titles in English and other languages published in Great Britain
– Full-text database
– Period covered: 1473-1700
– Website: http://eebo.chadwyck.com/home
Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO)
- Full-text database of 18th century texts in English and other languages published in Great Britain
- 180'000 academic and literary titles
- Full-text search option
- Website: http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/start.do?prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=unizur

Literature Online
- Primary literature: over 350,000 works of English and American literature (full-text)
- Secondary literature: more than 1 million bibliographic references to academic publications
- Biographies and literary lexica
- also covers the contents of ABELL (Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature), MLA and the Cambridge Companions to Literature
- Website: http://literature.proquest.com/

MLA International Bibliography
- International specialist literature on language and literature of modern languages since 1926
- Articles from more than 4,400 journals and anthologies, dissertations, congress reports and books
- Bibliographic descriptions, subject headings and rare abstracts (publishers’ texts) of the titles listed
- Website: http://web.b.ebscohost.com/ehost/search/advanced?sid=9191093d-6d99-468a-baa2-d55c54708e05%40sessionmgr198&vid=0&hid=122

Bibliography of Linguistic Literature Database (BLLDB)
- Bibliography with international specialist literature on linguistics
- Period covered: 1971-
- Website: http://www.blldb-online.de/blldb/templates/template.xml?vid={7AF9C1D8-A412-4D25-B628-34B07AF277A8}&contenttype=text/html&Skript=home&lang=de

Linguistics & Language Behavior Abstracts (LLBA)
- Database with international specialist literature (including psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics)
- Period covered: 1973-
- Website: http://search.proquest.com/llba/advanced

3.4 Full-text databases for newspapers (a selection)

LexisNexis
LexisNexis makes available 45,000 full-text sources, this means several thousand newspapers, journals as well as academic journals and trade publications (www.zb.uzh.ch → Recherche → E-Ressourcen → E-Zeitungen).
Furthermore, access is granted to extensive company and financial information, country studies and biographical information on individuals from all over the world. Many Swiss as well as international newspapers are available via LexisNexis.

Factiva
This database produced by Dow Jones offers full-text access to several thousand newspapers, journals, trade publications as well as press agencies from all over the world (www.zb.uzh.ch → Recherche → E-Ressourcen → E-Zeitungen).
Times Digital Archive

The Times Digital Archive holds all issues of the London Times since its beginnings in 1785 up to 2006 (www.zb.uzh.ch → Recherche → E-Ressourcen → E-Zeitungen). Articles from 1981 on are available via Factiva (see above).

Times Literary Supplement

ZB offers access to all issues of the weekly published British literary journal since its beginnings in 1902 up to 2008. The Times Literary Supplement contains countless articles and book reviews covering a broad range of subjects and areas including English literature (www.zb.uzh.ch → Recherche → E-Ressourcen → E-Zeitungen).

3.5 Specialist portals

Virtual Library of Anglo-American Culture (Lib AAC)

The Library of Anglo-American Culture & History is maintained by the Göttingen State and University Library (SUB). It serves as a portal for the Special Subject Collection Anglo-American Cultural Area covering language, literature, cultural anthropology as well as history, politics, constitution and administration of the Anglo-American cultural region (Great Britain, Ireland, Canada, USA, Australia, New Zealand). The cooperation with the library of the John F. Kennedy-Institute of the Free University of Berlin also makes also available the special subject collection North American Newspapers. The Lib AAC offers direct, easy and integrated access to the most important information services of the special subject collection: a metasearch engine allows a simultaneous search of the catalogue of the SUB Göttingen as a special collection library as well as article databases, specialist catalogues for websites and digitally available full texts.

http://aac.sub.uni-goettingen.de

3.6 EZB – Electronic Journals Library

The Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek EZB offers an exhaustive list of electronic scientific full-text journals (www.zb.uzh.ch → Recherche → E-Ressourcen → E-Journals und www.hbz.uzh.ch → E-Journals). All e-journals, whether freely available, licensed or nonaccessible, are listed here. At the moment, this list contains more than 97,000 periodicals. Access authorisation is marked with the help of traffic lights (red = no access, yellow = restricted access via Zentralbibliothek and University of Zurich, green = free access). Journal titles can be found using the search form provided or by browsing according to subject. Additionally, many licensed journals are also registered in the Rechercheportal with a link to the access via EZB.

Also included in the EZB is the electronic periodicals archive JSTOR which provides access to journals mostly from humanities and social sciences from their beginnings up to a so-called “moving wall” (depending on the journal, this may be up to 1 to 5 years to the latest issue). Current issues are
available only as an exception. JSTOR allows – in contrast to the EZB – a search for content in the journal articles. (www.jstor.org)

Other journal packages available via EZB are, for example:
- **DOAJ** (Directory of Open Access Journals): more than 6'900 freely available journals of all subjects (www.doaj.org)
- **Periodicals Archive Online**: 600 journals covering the subjects of humanities and social sciences from 1802 to 1995) (http://pao.chadwyck.co.uk)
- **Project Muse**: 490 journals of the humanities and social sciences (http://muse.jhu.edu)

### 3.7 E-books (ZB and UZH)

There is a large number of e-books available in the IP-range of ZB and UZH. They are mostly registered in the library catalogue. E-books can also be accessed via ZB-website (www.zb.uzh.ch → Recherche → E-Ressourcen → E-Books). The titles available are searchable according to several criteria. As e-books are licensed, they can only be accessed via the network of ZB or University (or via VPN).

### 4 Contact information

Please do not hesitate to contact the staff of the Zentralbibliothek Zürich in case you have any further questions: info@zb.uzh.ch

Subject librarian for English Linguistics and Literature at Zentralbibliothek: Susanna Truniger (susanna.truniger@zb.uzh.ch)

Many more links concerning English Linguistics and Literature can be found at: http://www.zb.uzh.ch/recherche/fachgebiete/englische-philologie/index.html.de