

The Basics of Searching for Journal Articles

The best way to search for journal articles is with the databases *JSTOR* or *NCLIVE*, both of which are available through the Shaw library website. These databases have full text and can be accessed from anywhere on campus, and possibly off campus.

Once you are at a computer that can access these databases:

- From Shaw's home page, navigate to Libraries, then to Learning Resources Center.
- Click either the "JSTOR" link or the "NCLIVE" link.
- JSTOR can also be accessed at www.jstor.org.
- NCLIVE can also be accessed at www.nclive.org.

JSTOR:

- JSTOR is nice because it includes full text pdf files and everything is an actual journal article (as opposed to magazines, newspapers, journals from other fields).
- With JSTOR, go to "Search", then enter search terms and select "Ecology" for the journal type.
- If your search turns up hundreds of articles, repeat the search making it more specific or combining terms (using the AND, OR, and NEAR features).
- When you've found a reasonable number of articles (<100), scroll through and find titles that sound interesting or appropriate. To see the abstract, click "Citation / Abstract." If the article is appropriate, you can download the pdf, read it at the computer, or print it.
- If you don't find enough articles that you like, try another search with different keywords and/or try NCLIVE.

NCLIVE:

- NCLIVE allows you to limit your search to full text articles. However, NCLIVE includes both scientific journal articles (which you're looking for) and many other types of articles (which cannot be used as sources). This means you have to figure out whether an article is a scientific journal article. Generally, scientific journal articles have titles that sound dry and scientific and report results of research. If you are unsure whether a particular source or article is acceptable, please email me.
- With NCLIVE, you can either enter your search terms into the EZ Search box, or you can browse to the Expanded Academic ASAP database (both give you access to the same articles).
- For EZ Search, enter your search terms in the box. Then click on "Full Text" next to the InfoTrac OneFile database (the other databases don't have many science journals, and have a lot of sources you can't use).
- If your search turns up hundreds of articles, repeat the search making it more specific or combining terms (using the "all words," "any words," or "exact phrase" buttons).
- To get to the Expanded Academic ASAP database from the main NCLIVE page, click on the "Browse Resources" tab. Then click on "Not EZ-Searchable." Scroll down and click on "Expanded Academic ASAP."

- Enter your search terms; under “Limit the current search,” select “to articles with text.”
- If your search turns up hundreds of articles, repeat the search making it more specific or combining terms (using the words *and*, *or*, *not* (e.g., abiotic and biotic, population or community, ecosystem not freshwater).
- With either EZ Search or Expanded Academic ASAP, scroll through and find titles that sound interesting or appropriate. Click on the title to see the abstract and full text (which you can read, print, or email to yourself). You can also mark articles that you want, and then print or email the entire marked list. Some articles also have a pdf icon which will take you to a pdf file of the article which can be read, saved, or printed.
- If you don’t find enough articles that you like, try another search with different keywords and/or try JSTOR.

Be diligent! When searching for articles, it can take a long time to find good articles that are related to your topic. If you’re not finding relevant articles, try adjusting your search terms. It’s often a good idea to try several different searches.