

Researching II: Academic Databases

Goal: This Directed Learning Activity is intended to introduce you to conducting research using academic databases as opposed to search engines, and will help you become familiar with terms, definitions and applications of the concepts surrounding the topic. If you would like to start by learning how to conduct research using search engines, refer to the Directed Learning Activity, “Researching I.”

Activities: This portion of the Directed Learning Activity is meant to be done independently. This portion will include activities such as exercises, games, Power Point presentations, and/or other lessons that show applications of the topic. You should print all materials used and take notes on anything you learn in this Directed Learning Activity.

1. Before you begin researching, you will need to gain access to academic databases. You can begin your research using search engines, however, this should not be the way you attain the information you will ultimately use. Search engines may help you discover key words to expand your search further. An academic database is a collection of credible resource materials that can be used in college level research writing.

At Crafton Hills Community College, you may obtain your database card at the reference desk on the first floor of the library. At any other school you attend in the future, you will also likely be able to obtain a database card at the school’s library. For your first Activity, you will need to obtain a database card.

2. Now, you will need to learn how to use the database card. Fortunately, your database card should contain instructions for reaching the databases. For Crafton Hills Community College students, the steps are available. In this Activity, you must follow the steps.

If you are a student at another school, the steps are likely very similar; however, if it is difficult to find the databases, you should ask someone at the reference desk in your school’s library, as the steps may be different.

If you are using the databases from a computer at your school, the passwords are likely already entered, but if you are conducting your research from your own computer, you will need to enter the passwords yourself. For Crafton Hills Community College students, these passwords are available to you on the database card. Other schools may have different methods for logging in to the academic databases. For this information, ask someone at the reference desk at your school’s library.

3. In this Activity, you will learn about some of the technical aspects regarding research. You will read a document about Boolean Connectors, and will learn how to put them to use in conducting your research. These Boolean Connectors may be used in the academic databases, as well as in the search engines.

Crafton Hills Writing Center: Directed Learning Activity

To learn about Boolean Connectors, cut and paste the following URL:

<http://www3.nl.edu/library/Tutorials/Boolean-Connectors.cfm>

Now you will have to choose your Research topic. Using the [EBSCO database](#), you will conduct a search on one of the following thesis statements, or a thesis statement of your own. You do not have to agree with the thesis statement you choose; consider it a jumping off point for your Research.

- a. The Television industry is the most powerful industry in history.
- b. Video games have negatively affected youths in the United States of America.
- c. The Health Care policies in the US should not be changed.

d. _____

After choosing your topic, underline the key words to be used in conducting your research. When you have done this, you will need to enter a database. Using the key words you have underlined, and what you have learned about Boolean Connectors, you will begin your research. If you click directly on to the advanced search tab, you will not have to enter the Boolean Connectors yourself; rather, you will need to choose the correct Boolean Connector from a list.

After conducting your search, you will need to choose at least five sources from the results. Write the URL of each on the lines below. If you have chosen any others, write them on the back of this page.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____

Review: With a tutor at the writing center, discuss specific terms, their definitions, and all of the examples you have written. Make sure to be clear about your understanding of the definitions, and the examples you have given. Clarity will be gauged by your use of specific terms you learned during the Activities portion of this Directed Learning Activity. **In order to pass this Directed Learning Activity, you must have found at least five reliable sources using the databases, and you should be able to explain your reasons for choosing each.**