The Library

Finding academic information:

English & Creative Writing

Database User Guide
Your guide to finding academic information for English and Creative Writing

This guide is designed to introduce you to electronic academic databases relevant to English and Creative Writing.

What are academic databases?

Online databases contain large amounts of current academic information and are ideal for researching a topic. The information included is primarily journal articles, but also newspaper articles, theses, conference papers, etc. Searching for information is easier using online databases than using printed material.

You should use academic databases rather than search engines such as Google because the material you will find is guaranteed to be reliable and of acceptable academic standard. The databases contain many peer-reviewed journals, this is the top quality academic information, that you should be using for assignments rather than information from websites found via Google.

Which are the most useful databases for your subject?

There are a number of databases listed in the English and Creative Writing subject guide pages. All contain relevant information but the more important ones include:

**MLA International Bibliography** indexes critical scholarship on literature, language, linguistics etc. Coverage includes journal articles, monographs, proceedings etc. from 1963 to the present and full text online access is now available to a growing number of journal articles.

**ProQuest Central (Includes Arts, Literature and Language databases)**
ProQuest Central is a large multi-disciplinary academic database. It consists of a collection of smaller subject specific databases. You can access information such as journal articles, dissertations, and newspaper articles.

Other databases not listed on either subject guide, but which may be useful include: **Credo Reference**, **Oxford Reference Online** and **Literature Resource Center** – all of which are included in Discover@Bolton.

**Top Tip**
Most suppliers of electronic databases update their interfaces regularly, so the appearance of the screens and the steps in the illustrations may be slightly different to those in this guide, but the instructions for searching the databases will be essentially the same.
Getting started

Load the Library web pages:  [https://www.bolton.ac.uk/library/Home.aspx](https://www.bolton.ac.uk/library/Home.aspx)

You should now navigate to the relevant subject guide.

---

The Subject Guides pages

After clicking on **Subject Guides** as shown above, click on either **Creative Writing** or **English** from the list of guides. Subject Guides display information on relevant databases, internet resources, study skills and links to relevant help guides, as well as contact details for your subject librarian.

It is possible to access individual databases and search for information. However, the Library has a search engine called **Discover@Bolton** which allows you to search most databases and other online resources simultaneously via a single search screen.

Therefore, this guide will focus on using Discover@Bolton effectively. You can access Discover@Bolton via any subject guide or the Library homepage.

**Note**: All the most important databases listed in the Creative Writing and English subject guides are available in Discover@Bolton.

---

**Top Tip**

If you use Discover@Bolton off campus, click on the red bar at the top of the screen to load the University of Bolton’s Electronic Resources login page and then enter your university username and password.
Discover@Bolton

Before you start your search think about the keywords you are going to search for. You should think about any related terms or synonyms you could try in case you don’t find anything suitable the first time. For further help with developing a search strategy, see the Discovering Information tutorial in the My Research Needs section of LEAP Online, which you can access from the Quick Links section on the Library homepage or any subject guide.

Finding a definition

It may be useful for you to define the terms included in your assignment in order to fully understand the topic you are researching. If you type a single keyword or phrase in the search box and run the search, a definition will appear on the right of the screen. Where available, this will be sourced from one of our reference databases, such as Credo Reference. However, if a definition isn't available from these sources, Wikipedia will be used. Please check with your tutor as to its acceptability as a quotable reference.

Basic searching

To access Discover@Bolton, click on the Library homepage or the Databases, journals and articles tab in any Subject Guide.

In the Search box type a keyword for the topic you are looking for and then click on (when accessing Discover@Bolton from a Subject Guide click on Discover).

For multiple words or a phrase use speech marks, eg “painting technique”

Top Tip

You can use * to replace letters within words, eg, organi*ation will search for organization and organisation. You can also use * to truncate stems of words eg, writ* will search for write, writers, writing etc.
Narrowing your search

If your search has produced a lot of results you will need to narrow it down. One way of doing this is by adding another keyword(s) to your original search term. You can combine 2 or more terms by using **AND**, **OR**, and **NOT**.

(This is known as Boolean Logic and is used by most electronic sources of information. Using **AND** narrows the search by finding articles that contain both terms. Using **OR** broadens the search by finding articles that contain either one or both of the terms. Using **NOT** narrows the search by finding articles that contain one term but not the other).

You can also refine a search by using the filter options to the left of your search results. These allow you to limit results to include ‘full text’ and ‘peer reviewed’ articles only, as well as limit by ‘item type’, ‘subject’, ‘publication date’ and ‘language’.

Peer-reviewed scholarly journals provide the highest quality academic information so you may wish to start with these results before looking at magazines, trade publications, etc.
Note: After you have refined your search an option to clear filters is displayed at the top of the screen. Click this before you run another search – unless you wish to keep the same filter options. If you later want to delete an individual filter, click on the cross at the side of it.

Advanced searching

Advanced searching gives you more search options and removes the need to type AND, OR etc. Click on the Advanced Search icon at the top of the screen. This can be useful if the basic search facility gives you too many results. Try changing All fields to either Subject, Title, Abstract or Author etc, this will provide you with a smaller more relevant set of results.

The screen below shows available search fields and selections made in order to retrieve a smaller set of relevant results.
Looking at your search results

The results will show a mixture of different types of resource, such as ebooks, journal articles, newspaper articles theses etc. The type of resource is shown under the title and author/publication details.

To see the abstract (summary of an article), plus additional details about the record, click on **Preview**.

To look at the full text of a record, click on the **Title** or **Full Text Online**. You may be prompted to log in with your university username and password at this point.

Note: If **Citation Online** is shown, the full text of an article may not be available via the Library’s subscriptions. Read the article’s abstract to decide if the article is relevant to your research. If you think it is, you can order the article for free online via the Library’s Inter-Library Loan service.

Click on **Citation Online** and on the next screen click on the button **Request via Inter-Library loan**. On the next screen, login to your Library account and submit your ILL request. However, there may be plenty of other relevant full text journals available for your research so explore these before applying for an Inter-Library Loan.

**Top Tip**

You can sort your results by date of publication or relevance by clicking on at the top of the results screen. If you click on , you will be presented with a list of citation options, select Harvard. You can then either email or copy and paste records into your list of references or bibliography. Note: there are many variations of Harvard so make sure it is the one required by your tutor. You may need to amend the citation once you have copied it into your Word document.
Saving selected search results

Before you can export, print, or email a record or multiple records, you must first save selected results to a ‘folder’.

To do this, click on the folder icon at the right of the record. You will then notice that results appear in a folder at the top of the screen.

To open and view the contents of a folder, click on at the top right of the screen.

To delete a record from a folder, click on at the side of it. To close a folder and return to your results, click on at the top of the screen.

Printing and emailing selected results

Once you have records in a folder, you have the option to print, email or export them.

Click on the folder icon and then choose whether you want to print, email or export them by clicking on the relevant option to the right.

Note: Contents of a folder are retained temporarily only, when you exit the database or after an extended period of inactivity (20mins) they will be cleared. You can permanently save items by creating a ProQuest RefWorks* account – see below.
*This is not the same version as RefWorks which is accessible via the Databases A-Z list but a simplified version. If you already have a RefWorks account you will not be able to access this account via Discover@Bolton RefWorks.

**ProQuest RefWorks within Discover@Bolton**

Creating a ProQuest account allows you to store all your saved items permanently and to manage and organize your documents effectively. To create an account, click on the **menu icon** at the top right of the screen. At the drop down box, click on **RefWorks Log In**. At the next screen, click on **No account- sign up here**.

Enter your university email address – not a personal email - and choose your own password. Once you have created your account, when you click on the folder icon of a record it will be permanently stored in your RefWorks account.

To access your account at any time, click on the folder icon at the top of the screen.

You can create folders to organize your results by using **My Folders**. You can also share resources with other people using the **Sharing function** which allows you to email them direct from RefWorks.

It is possible to select resources to create an exportable bibliography or reference list. Select relevant results and click on ****, then select **Create Bibliography**. Select a style, such as Harvard. You can then copy and paste your results into your assignment.

**Note:** you may need to edit each entry so that it fits the Bolton Harvard style.

There are many other functions which you can explore by clicking on the help button.
Using individual databases

You may prefer to access and search databases individually. Although the interfaces are different for each the principles of searching are essentially the same. Apply the skills you have learned in using Discover@Bolton when using other such databases.

Databases relevant to Creative Writing and English include:

- **Credo Reference**  (included in Discover@Bolton)
- **JSTOR**  (included in Discover@Bolton)
- **Literature Resource Center** (LRC)  (included in Discover@Bolton)
- **MLA International Bibliography**  (included in Discover@Bolton)
- **Oxford Reference Online**  (included in Discover@Bolton)
- **ProQuest Central**  (included in Discover@Bolton)
- **SCOPUS**  (included in Discover@Bolton)

For further help with some of these databases see the cribsheets available on the Subject Guide pages for Creative Writing and English.
Finally …

This guide is only an introduction to electronic databases. Remember there are various resources available via relevant subject guides to help with your research.

If you require further help searching databases contact your librarian, Anne Keddie:

Tel: 01204 903281
Email: a.keddie@bolton.ac.uk

If you require immediate help during Library opening hours:

Tel. 01204 903232
Email subjecthelp@bolton.ac.uk