



How to Select Appropriate Resources A-State Online Writing Center

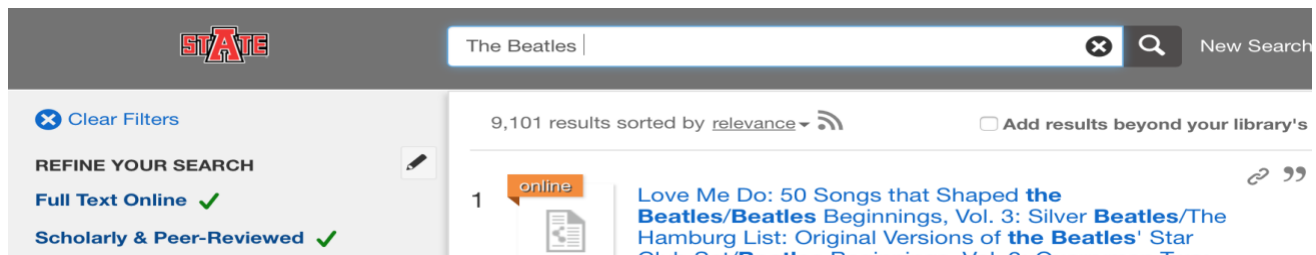
Are you writing a difficult research paper and struggling to find quality sources? Have you stumbled upon too much information about the subject you want to talk about? All of these problems can be solved by learning how to choose your sources when working on a project. Like most things, quality is better than quantity when it comes to selecting resources. Let's discuss how to easily comb through the "coal" within databases to find our "diamonds."

- **Find a Topic and Narrow it Down:** After a careful prompt reading, it is time to decide what topic will be the best fit. Choose something that sparks your interest (it will make it easier to research and write about later on). Once you have decided what that is, work on narrowing it down to something specific within your field that you can build on. The best topic you can find is 1.) isn't so broad that you get too many search results 2.) isn't narrowed down to the point of having little to no results.

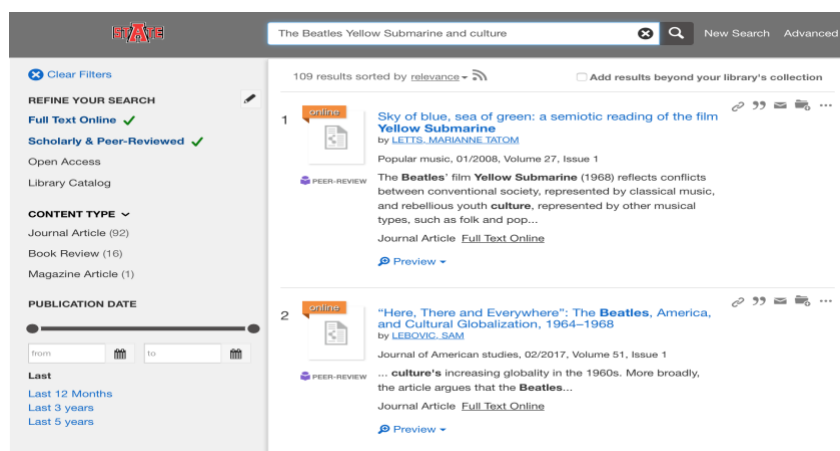
(Example of a subject that is too broad. It yields 9,101 search results).

A screenshot of a search results page. At the top left is the Arkansas State University logo. A search bar contains the text "The Beatles" with a search icon and a "New Search" link. Below the search bar, it shows "9,101 results sorted by relevance" and a checkbox for "Add results beyond your library's". On the left side, there are filter options: "Clear Filters", "REFINE YOUR SEARCH", "Full Text Online" (checked), and "Scholarly & Peer-Reviewed" (checked). The first search result is numbered "1" and has an "online" tag. The title of the result is "Love Me Do: 50 Songs that Shaped the Beatles/Beatles Beginnings, Vol. 3: Silver Beatles/The Hamburg List: Original Versions of the Beatles' Star Club Set/Beatles Beginnings, Vol. 2: Quarrymen Time".

(Example of a subject that is too broad. It yields 9,101 search results).

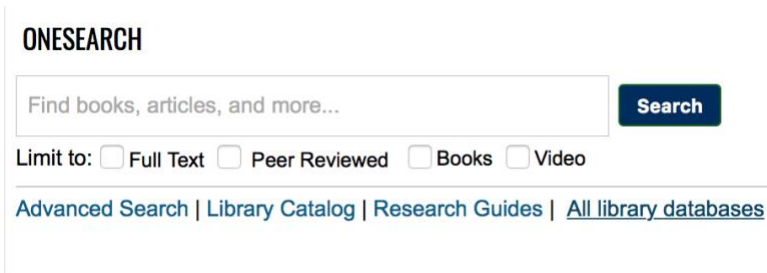


(Example of a narrowed-down topic that yields only 109 results).

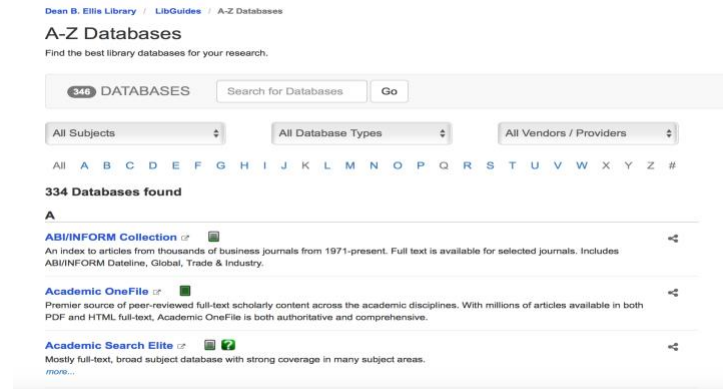


- **Decide on a Database or Multiple Databases:** Next, you will have to decide which databases to use in your scope. When choosing databases, it is important to find one that corresponds with the discipline you are writing for (i.e., Nursing research found in a nursing database or Psychology research found in that corresponding database). Our library even has a spot for choosing databases.

(Click on “All Library Databases” on our Dean B. Ellis Library site. It’ll pop up with this next image that shows we have 334 databases to choose from).



The image shows the ONESEARCH search interface. At the top left, the text "ONESEARCH" is displayed. Below it is a search bar with the placeholder text "Find books, articles, and more...". To the right of the search bar is a blue "Search" button. Below the search bar, there are four checkboxes for "Limit to": "Full Text", "Peer Reviewed", "Books", and "Video". At the bottom of the interface, there are four links: "Advanced Search", "Library Catalog", "Research Guides", and "All library databases".



The image shows the "A-Z Databases" page from the Dean B. Ellis Library. The page title is "A-Z Databases" and it includes the text "Find the best library databases for your research." Below the title, there is a search bar with the text "340 DATABASES" and a "Go" button. There are three dropdown menus: "All Subjects", "All Database Types", and "All Vendors / Providers". Below these menus, there is a row of letters from A to Z and a hash symbol, representing the alphabetical index. The page indicates "334 Databases found" and lists several databases under the letter "A": "ABI/INFORM Collection", "Academic OneFile", and "Academic Search Elite". Each database entry includes a brief description and a "more..." link.

- **Choosing Qualitative Sources Over Quantitative Sources:** After deciding a topic, narrowing it down, and choosing a database, it is time to choose which sources will benefit you the most. In order to do this, you must figure out what information the resource is providing, how the author is producing and supplementing that argument, how that information works for or against your own argument, and if this information is coming from a reputable source. We can do this by utilizing the abstract. Below you will find the abstract from the first article in my “narrowed” search.

Full Text | Scholarly Journals

Sky of blue, sea of green: a semiotic reading of the film *Yellow Submarine*

LETTS, MARIANNE TATOM. *Popular Music*; Cambridge Vol. 27, Iss. 1, (Jan 2008): 1-14.
DOI:10.1017/S026114300800144X

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doi:10.1017/S026114300800144X Printed in the United Kingdom

Sky of blue, sea of green: a semiotic reading of the film *Yellow Submarine*

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Abstract
The Beatles' film Yellow Submarine (1968) reflects conflicts between conventional society, represented by classical music, and rebellious youth culture, represented by other musical types, such as folk and pop (subsumed under the term 'vernacular'). Taking their inspiration from the song 'Yellow Submarine' (Revolver, 1966), the filmmakers created a narrative for a psychedelic 'hero's journey' from existing Beatles songs. This article discusses how the musical codes that symbolise different groups are used to mediate between divergent elements in both the film and contemporary society, by referring to such elements beyond the film as the Beatles' comprehensive body of songs (which in itself forms a kind of mythology) and cultural events of the time. In Yellow Submarine, the Blue Meanies improvise Pepperland by introducing all producers of music, whether 'classical' (the string quartet led by the elderly Lord Mayor) or 'vernacular' (Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band). The Beatles are able to free Pepperland by manipulating and ultimately unling the musical codes – an idealistic message for the 'real world' to heed.

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The Beatles: The Biography
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Philadelphia Vol. 63 Iss. 2. (Dec

The top of the article shows you the needed information for your citation, and the abstract tells you the contents of the text before you dive into it.

- **Gather Sources:** Some professors list the number of sources required for their assignments, and others describe the type of source required (i.e, book, reputable journal from a specific discipline, a newspaper article, an interview, etc.). Some instructors won't have a requirement for the amount or type of source you choose. These will be listed in your prompt if required. Once you have this information, your keywords (from your narrowed-down topic), your database and access to abstracts, you can choose your handful of quality sources. Each should be carefully handpicked to best fit your topic and argument.

Helpful Tip: Use filters when working to sort this information. Use full-text and peer-reviewed articles for the best results and the easiest article access. You can also specify the content type, year of publication, and include more subject terms other than your original keywords (these subject terms help further link your research to your discipline).



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